

NOISE IT ABROAD

OR

HITLER AND HIS

METHODS.



C. F. CREIGHTON

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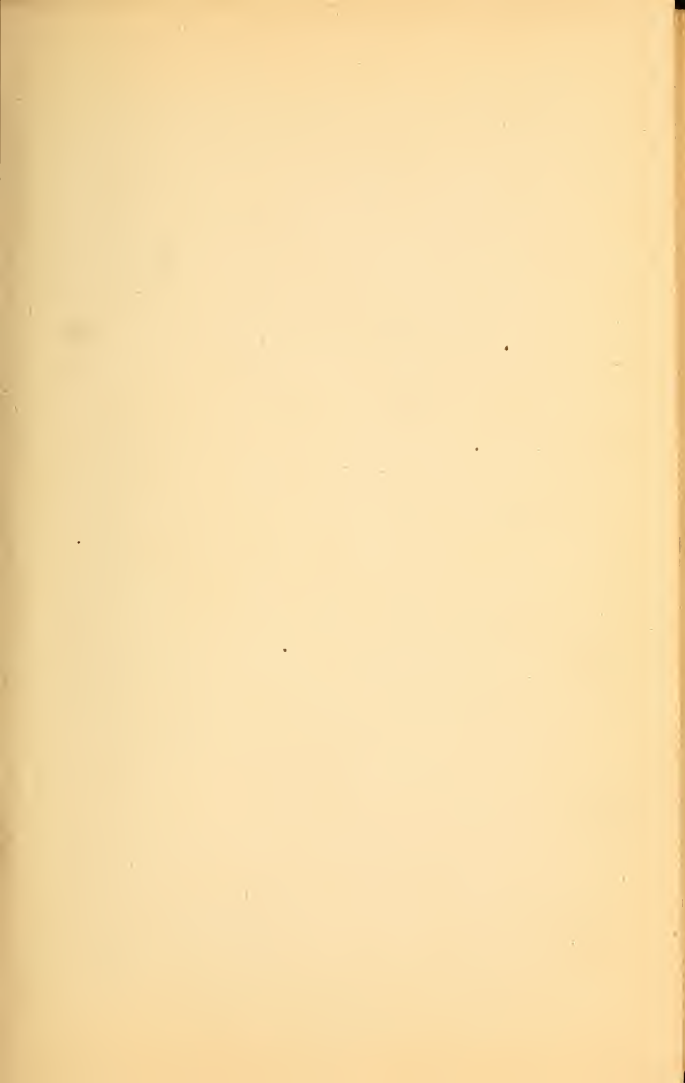
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J. S. Bitter

NOISE IT ABROAD;

OR,

BITLER AND HIS METHODS,

TOGETHER WITH

REMARKABLE EVENTS ATTENDING SOME
OF THE REVIVALS IN WHICH
HE HAS LABORED.

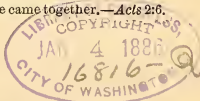
BY

REV. C. F. CREIGHTON, A. M.

Of the Ohio Conference.

With an Introduction, by Rev. S. A. Keen, A. M.

Now when this was noised abroad the multitude came together. — Acts 2:6.



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TO

WHOM I OWE MORE THAN I CAN PAY, AND LOVE BETTER
THAN I CAN TELL, THE BEST BODY OF MEN I EVER
KNEW, THE WORTHY SUCCESSORS OF

JOHN WESLEY,

WHO ARE KNOWN TO ALL THE WORLD AS

Methodist Preachers,

THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR.

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,—REV. 14:16.

Believing that an extended knowledge of the work of God in saving souls, is in conformity with the Divine method of reaching the masses, I hereby endorse the labors of Rev. C. F. Creighton, A. M., in publishing this work.

James S. Dittler.

PREFACE.

“These remarkable events ought to be recorded. We are witnessing scenes that are worthy to be compared with the early days of Methodism.” Such was the remark of a brother who was present at the Circleville meeting; and his view of the matter was abundantly seconded by ministers and laymen who volunteered the same suggestion. Among those advising the publication of an account of these meetings, one wrote, expressing the opinion that “such a book would have a mission, and might be a blessing to thousands.” Encouraged by these sentiments, and with something of the same hope, the book was begun in the midst of the scenes which it records.

The Author acknowledges that it was written in great haste, and in the midst of pastoral labors the most arduous and abundant of any period of his ministry. But while this admission might be fatal to a philosophical treatise, he humbly submits that in a work of this kind the same objec-

tions cannot apply; for, while he was in haste, he was heated too, and fresh from the scenes which are here described.

The *title* of the book, if understood in the sense of noising abroad the fame of Rev. J. S. Bitler, is a misnomer. It is our purpose to noise abroad the work of God as demonstrated under his labors; and the aptness of this title can only be appreciated, when on reading the book it is found to be the key note of Mr. Bitler's method in conducting revivals. Its warrant is seen, not only in the results that crown his labors, and in the practical commendation of men of business, but in Scripture precedents. When on the day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost fell on the disciples, "this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded" — "and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." It was afterward noised abroad through the book of *The Acts*, and no man can number the hosts that have heard the "sound," and felt the "mighty rushing wind."

Peter was preacher in charge on that day, and when "standing up with the eleven he lifted up his voice," his fame was destined to be forever associated with the day of Pentecost, and the fiery baptism of the Holy Ghost. But the mere prominence of Peter's name, is so far eclipsed by

the glory that covered them all, that nobody thinks of attributing a line of the sacred record to praise or panegyric. Unless the evangelist is but an agent in the hands of God, he is nothing.

This book was not written at the instance of Bro. Bitler; nor to serve his purpose as a professional evangelist; nor to noise abroad his fame, as a primary or secondary end; nor yet to advertise his meetings. It is written under the impression that these revival scenes ought to be published for the glory of God; and in the hope, that these incidents, methods and suggestive means employed by him, may contribute incentives to revival work, by stimulating the faith of the church, and becoming helpful to christian workers who are aiming to secure the salvation of men. If however, a more extended knowledge of his meetings and methods shall add to his celebrity, and widen the field of his usefulness, we cannot see that objections should be raised. He is surely entitled to a just appreciation, if by the results of his labors he earns the reputation of being a successful evangelist.

The book contains an account of at least two revivals, which, it is thought, are worthy to rank among the most remarkable of modern times. Read in the dim light of the Author's imperfect delineations, the statement may not seem to find

a warrant in these pages, but to those conversant with these meetings and familiar with revival literature, no chapter of modern revival history contains more marked manifestation of divine power.

While not attempting a comprehensive "Life" of Rev. J. S. Bitler, it was thought that a biographical account of the chief personage to which it relates would be essential to the work. This is made especially applicable, since the connected incidents of his life form a series of special providences that lead to, and eventually culminate in, the labors and triumphs of these great meetings.

Some things are said that reflect a degree of credit upon the evangelist which his modesty might disclaim. But the Author is himself responsible, and insists upon the right to tell as much of the truth as in his judgment will contribute to a proper understanding of the theme in hand.

Keeping constantly in view the end of such a work, the Author has sought to utilize the various phases presented, and has introduced practical remarks and incidental suggestions with reference to the management of revivals in detail. The last part of the work, which treats of *methods*, will be found to be liberally interlined with these suggestions. While the Author is entitled to no

claim as a teacher, he assumes that evangelistic workers are *students*, and not only anxious to know the facts of revival work, but the philosophy of its cause and effect, as observed by the writer during the various stages of these meetings. If he has transcended the limits of a becoming modesty in volunteering advice, he pleads in defense an ardent desire to see revivals of religion intelligently promoted.

C. F. CREIGHTON.

CIRCLEVILLE, O, July 1, 1885.



CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION..... 17

CHAPTER I. 23

Biography.

Birth — Parentage — Baptism—Conversion—Call to
Preach—Preparation for the Ministry.

CHAPTER II. 33

Biography, Continued.

Qualifications — Urbana Camp-Meeting — A Divine
Anointing—Partial Estimate of the Subject—First
Attempts at Public Speaking —Licensed to Preach.
First sermon.

CHAPTER III. 43

Evangelistic and Regular Work.

First Impressions—Revivals at Ostrander and Flint.
Remarkable Incidents—Olive Green—Appointed
to Carthage—Harrison, Westwood, and Westward.

CONTENTS. 11

CHAPTER IV. 52

Missionary to Dakota.

Chamberlain — Sickness — Death — Final Abandonment of the Field—No more “Plans”—Home Again—Revivals at Third street, Columbus; and Main street, Chillicothe.

CHAPTER V. 58

Fishing on the banks of the Missouri.

Charles H. Gilmore—The Converted Comedian In A New Role.

CHAPTER VI. 71

Weighing Anchor.

Supplying Wesley Chapel—Evangelistic Impressions. Transferred to The Ohio Conference—The Climax of Decision—A Location Granted.

CHAPTER VII. 82

The Vindication.

Revival At Corning —Obstacles—Political Excitement—Rev. Benjamin Green—Warnings — Saved From A Drunkard's Grave.

CHAPTER VIII. 92

Gallipolis.

Its Location—Commercial Advantages—Moral Status, and Methodism.

CHAPTER IX. 105

The Gallipolis Revival.

Holiday Diversions—Appliances used—A “Watch Night” Meeting—Young People’s Meeting—Going “Up-Stairs”—Paying the Bills.

CHAPTER X. 114

Gallipolis Revival, Continued.

The “High Water Mark.”—Special Meetings—Press Comment—Drunk—A Converted Catholic—Obduracy Conquered.

CHAPTER XI. 128

Gallipolis Revival, Continued.

Six Hundred and Twenty-Five—A Sceptic Saved. Backslider Reclaimed — “Weak-Minded” — Non-Church-Goers—County Officials—FIRE!!!

CHAPTER XII. 139

Gallipolis Revival, Continued.

The Local Press, *Journal, Bulletin, Tribune,* and *District News*—Twenty-six Hundred and Fifty-one—“The Dipper”—River Men—All Aboard!

CHAPTER XIII. 151

Gallipolis Revival, Concluded.

Great Sinners—Deliverance from Bondage—Saloon Interests — Amusing Persecutions — Testimonial from the Mayor of the City—“Refugees”—Prohibition of the Liquor Traffic.

CONTENTS.	13
CHAPTER XIV.	164
<i>Circleville Revival.</i>	
Elements of Preparation—Field of Battle.	
CHAPTER XV.	173
<i>Circleville Revival, Continued.</i>	
Three Hundred Conversions in Three Weeks—Young Men. Noising it Abroad—"Holding Out"—Holiness Commended—Young People's Meetings.—Five Hundred and Forty Conversions.	
CHAPTER XVI.	185
<i>Circleville Revival, Continued.</i>	
Behind the Scenes—Private Talk to Young Men.—An Altar on the Stage.	
CHAPTER XVII.	196
An All-day Meeting—A Business Man's Stand-point. A Dress Parade—Experiences of C. J.—, Wm. H.—, and Family—Mrs. Frame's Revival.	
CHAPTER XVIII.	210
No Backing—Experience of George S.—.—Telegraph Operators—No More Sprees.	
CHAPTER XIX.	220
Other Denominations—Effects on the Community. Too Many Churches!—Conversion of a Deaf Mute—Triumphant Death of the First Convert.—Another Safe.	

CHAPTER XX.

Day of Jubilee.

Invitations — Praise Service — Sermon—Afternoon Session—Responses—Reports from Visiting Ministers—Closing Address by Dr. Trimble—A Pentecost at Night—Fruits of the Jubilee ; and Closing Service of the Revival.

CHAPTER XXI.

Methods.

The Study of Methods—A Key to the Situation. Preaching not at fault—Copyists—Questionable Methods—A “Bad Box.”

CHAPTER XXII.

Bitler's Methods.

The Banner—Scripture Mottoes—Tracts—The Newspapers—“Done for Effect”—Reaching the Masses.—Demonstrations.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Bitler's Methods, Continued.

Help When Needed—Sounding His Trumpet—Loose Ends—Singing—Shaking Hands—Special Features—Doctrines Preached—No Opposition.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Pastor and Evangelist.

Pastor the Commander-in-Chief—Evangelist to have
Full Scope—Not to be divorced from his Methods.
—Conspicuous Absentees— Order of Signatures.
—Falling Off — All Evangelistic Agencies One
Work.





INTRODUCTION.

THE subject of *Evangelism* is at present attracting attention as never before. The study is full of interest to all the friends of *aggressive* Christianity. In view of these facts, the present volume will be a welcome and invaluable addition to evangelistic literature—a new department in religious publication, distinct from the devotional and theological. This book might well be called a treatise on *modern evangelism*; for, while it embodies the biography of a marvelously successful living evangelist, giving its pages the fascination of personal fact and incident, it also combines therewith reflections, suggestions and instructions respecting revivalistic work by the author, the Rev. C. F. Creighton, whose success as a *pastoral* evangelist is parallel with that of its subject, the Rev. J. S. Bitler, as a *special* evangelist. The book is both concrete and discursive; theoretical and practical.

Two forms of evangelism are taught in the

New Testament, and have characterized the Church throughout its history. One is pastoral evangelism, as enforced by the apostle when he enjoins upon one who was to have the care of the churches, "Do the work of an evangelist." This form of evangelism has its representatives in Timothy, of the Apostolical times, and in his successors of the pastorate in modern times, such as Spurgeon, Cuyler, Pentecost, J. O. Peck, and many other pastors who are winning souls to Christ by the appliances of the regular pastorate. The other form is special evangelism, as recognized by the same apostle when he writes, "some evangelists," represented by Philip in the early church, and by Moody, Hammond, Harrison, and a host of others who at the present time are turning multitudes to righteousness. These modes of evangelism do not divide its kingdom against itself. They are correlative forces; both are indispensable to the most rapid and signal extension of Christ's kingdom. The present volume recognizes both of these modes of evangelism, and is equally suggestive respecting each.

The recent prominence of special evangelism; the large force, ministerial and lay, which it now marshals, and the success which is attending its movements in the conversion of sinners and the

quickenings of the churches, justly entitle it to the confidence and appreciation of the church. The following pages present graphically and thrillingly how tributary the work of special evangelism, which its subject is doing, is to the improvement and advancement of the church. That another new and powerful evangelist should arise, or that the number of such are rapidly multiplying, is not strange nor alarming, for the popular demand is greater than the supply.

It is inspiring to see Moody, Hammond, Harrison, and a legion like them, moving forward under the tremendous anointing of power which propels them in their soul-saving enterprises and endeavors; but, with all these are doing, and all that is being done by special evangelism in its organized movements—the Salvation Army, the Prayer Leagues, Associations for the Promotion of Holiness, the Young Men's Christian Association—it fails to fully supply the increasing demand there is for it. The calls of the living evangelists are far in excess of their time and strength. This matter is not yet overdone. The Holy Spirit is neither superfluous nor prodigal in his bestowments. When He gives to the church "*some evangelists,*" He only sends what He knows is needed. And whom He calls to the work He justifies, that is,

indicates by the signs of an evangelist, following in the wake of their labors. If abundant fruit is proof of a divine sanction, the subject of this book, as its pages will show, is liberally commended of God. Every evangelist in a marked sense is *sui generis*. He has a personality peculiarly his own. This is his principal capital naturally. Divine wisdom no doubt chooses him for this reason. It is no fault that evangelists are *peculiar*. They are made so, and called of God because they are so. Their peculiarity adapts them to their mission. Their work partakes of their own individuality. Their methods are emanations from themselves. They are a law unto themselves, and must be so judged. They are Spiritual Autocrats by divine appointment. Therefore in their meetings they are leaders; all others are followers. Pastors and Churches who do not recognize and accept as providential their leadership, ought not to invite their presence and services. The subject of this book is peculiar in his personality, in his anointing, and in his methods. The title of the book is suggested by the most prominent feature in his diversified methods, that is, "*Noising it Abroad*," a continuous declaring by himself and by others of what God has done, and is doing. This is staple in all his meetings, and is obvious-

ly effective. The greater part of the book is an entertaining development of the judicious way in which he uses this tactics. Having been acquainted intimately for ten years with both the author and subject of this volume, and being thoroughly conversant with their gifts, graces, usefulness and manner of life, it affords me unmixed pleasure to commend, to all lovers of Christianity in earnest, this volume, which is alike creditable to their hearts and their lives. The book is aflame with the spirit of the revival scenes and success which it chronicles; it gleams with live coals gathered from fresh altar fires; its thoughts burn with holy fervor. The intellectual and literary quality of these pages is free from platitudes and insipidness. There is mental power, originality, and often brilliancy traceable in them. The volume is in the spirit of its title; it "noises abroad" the great dealings of God, and so becomes an evangel carrying cheer and inspiration to God's workers everywhere. Were all its readers as well informed of the circumstances of its origination as myself, they would feel as does the writer of this Introduction, that it is a child of Providence, and would peruse it with an interest which only such an understanding of its production could inspire. Having been indited by the same blessed Holy Spirit which in-

spired the Word of God, may it partake in a finite degree of the efficiency which is peculiar to the book of Revelation. May it not return void, but accomplish that whereto a Divine Providence shall send it.

S. A. KEEN.

Lancaster, O. May 1, 1885.



NOISE IT ABROAD.

CHAPTER I.

Biography.

BIRTH, PARENTAGE, BAPTISM, CONVERSION, CALL
TO PREACH, PREPARATION FOR THE MINISTRY.

JAMES SUMMERFIELD BITLER was born at Lancaster, Fairfield Co., Ohio, March 28, 1852. His parents, Geo. J. and Rebecca A., were devout Methodists. The father was for many years a Local Preacher, and used frequently to get so happy that he would remain in the church for hours praising God and holding communion with Him. Though he never entered the itinerancy he was an indefatigable worker, seldom ever missing a Sabbath that he did not preach or lead a class.

When James was about six months old his mother felt like Hannah of old that it was their duty to "take him up to the house of the Lord," and dedicate the child to God in holy baptism.

Both parents indulged the impression that he was to be a preacher of the gospel, and with that hope and belief they fully consecrated him to God. He was baptized by Rev. Zachariah Connel, in the old Methodist Church on the hill, at Lancaster, O.

When James was three years old his parents moved to Missouri, where they continued to reside until typhoid fever invaded the family circle and his sister Jennie was taken. Six weeks later the father died by the same disease. The widowed mother was left in exceeding straightened circumstances. The war of the Rebellion was raging with unabated fury, and surrounded by elements of the struggle and evidences of danger, this broken family, consisting now of the mother, a daughter Clara, and James, fled from these scenes of sorrow and death, removing to Arcanum, Darke Co., Ohio. An older daughter, Anna, having been married, remained in Missouri, where she continues to reside.

At the time of this removal to Ohio James was thirteen years of age, and shortly after his arrival at the new home he was converted to God. At first he seemed to take no interest in the protracted meeting then in progress; but one night, having nothing else to do he strayed into the church. When his sister Clara came home that

night she surprised the mother by saying, "Mother, Jimmie was converted to-night," and as she said this, he came in. His mother led him to another room and said, "Jimmie, were you converted to-night?" He replied, with characteristic positiveness, "Yes mother I was." She said, "My child I didn't know you were seeking religion." "I wasn't seeking" said James, "but when they called for mourners and a good many went up, I thought, is every body trying to get religion but me? I jumped up and ran to the altar. I wasn't a bit ashamed. I just held my head up, and prayed with all my might, and the whole house was as dark as midnight, and the black clouds were all above. I kept looking up and praying, and mother, I saw as plain as I see you, an angel come right into that darkness, and wave his wings, and the clouds all rolled away, and everything was as bright and light as day, and I'm as happy as I can be. Don't you think that's religion." His mother thought it was, and though we should hesitate to record *phenomenal* cases of conversion like this, except from the lips of a child, we concur in the opinion. The Sunday after his conversion his mother took him to Class with her. During the meeting she resolved to talk with the leader and ask him to interest him-

self in James. She timidly approached him and said "Bro. ———, you know that Jimmie was converted last week. I've brought him to Class to-day, and as he has no father to advise or instruct him, I thought I would ask you to have a little oversight of him." Before she had ceased speaking, he turned to go away, saying in a very careless manner "Ah, we have all got enough to do to take care of our own." Such indifference needs no comment. The only charitable construction the case will bear, is that possibly the brother belonged to that class of older persons who brought their impressions over from the days when it was considered quite out of the divine order for children to be converted. An apprenticeship in the service of the devil, which employed the years of youth, used to be considered by many as an essential factor to repentance and conversion at a later period. Thank God those days are passed; except possibly with a few relics that survive the ancient opinion.

For a time all went well with the young convert, and his zeal, and efforts at praying publicly, when opportunity was given, gave promise of future usefulness. But with few of the helps and opportunities usually afforded, and preaching at that place only once in two weeks, in spite of the influence of his godly mother, he

soon lost the witness of his adoption and fell into sin. With wild associates that led him farther from Christ he soon became a leader, and came near losing his soul. Many of these companions turned out badly. These surroundings were providentially changed by the family moving to *Piqua, O.*, where James was thrown into associations of a better kind. Visiting the Sabbath School at the Second Presbyterian Church, he happened to fall into a class taught by Mrs. McKinney and it was through her influence, and that of the class she taught, that a desire to be religious was awakened in his heart. His teacher, the wife of Hon. Frank McKinney, was a godly woman, and Mr. Bitler has since regarded her with the esteem almost of a mother. Under these impressions and while in company with an intimate friend of about the same age, while they were standing on the pavement under the Y. M. C. A. rooms, it was mutually agreed that they go up-stairs and ask the boys to pray for them. This was the step that decided his heart for Christ, and from that hour he dates his salvation. Not only so, but he has ever since felt an undying affection for the Y. M. C. A.; and in his subsequent ministry one of the prominences of his pulpit and personal work has been, to urge men to *yield to God*. Believing as he does, that once

surrendered, the heart will be open to the reception of Christ; if indeed an absolute yielding does not necessarily include the reception of Christ.

This transformation occurred while he was in his eighteenth year, and he very soon united with the Green street Methodist Episcopal Church, then under the Pastorate of Rev. W. H. Sutherland, D. D. His successor in that charge was Rev. W. I. Fee, under whose pastorate James was licensed to exhort, and subsequently directed to a course of study at the Ohio Wesleyan University.

He had long cherished a desire to support his widowed mother, but even this fond ambition was not to be realized. Having learned a trade, chiefly with this end in view, a crisis in business threw him out of work, and the young tin-smith, failing to find employment had plenty of time to think.

Before his conversion he had no taste whatever for reading, but chancing to discover soon after his conversion an old dusty copy of one of Mr. Wesley's Sermons, lying on a shelf in the shop of his employers, he took it down and concluded to read it. It was on "Redeeming the Time." It fired his heart and set him to thinking. The conviction of a call to the ministry came slightly

over him, but produced no special impression except to alarm him. An education was necessary, but two insuperable barriers seemed to confront him. The one was time, and the other money.

He was accustomed to pray three times a day, and that he might be alone with God he went to the cellar and made it his sanctuary. There, surrounded by boxes and barrels and in the dark—fully typical of the difficulties with which he was surrounded—the conviction that he must preach was matured, and yielding to the impression he said to the Lord: “If Thou wilt open the way I will follow.” Shortly after this an opportunity was afforded for telling his mother. They had just listened to an eloquent sermon, by a Presbyterian minister, on the subject of Missions. When on the way home, and with great trepidation he said, “I believe, mother, if I had an education I’d like to preach the gospel.” This announcement, made with so much embarrassment and revealing his inmost struggles was no sooner made than the rejoicing mother replied; “Why, Jimmie! You don’t say so! It is the answer of your father’s prayers made from your birth to the day of his death, that you should preach the gospel.”

So saying she promised to write to his uncle at once, and did so that very night. The “uncle”

referred to, was the Rev. S. D. Clayton of the Cincinnati Conference, and though not an uncle he was a double cousin of Mrs. Bitler and was familiarly known as "uncle" by members of the family.

At this time Rev. W. I. Fee was their pastor, and to him the mother went with her burdened heart. Said she, "Bro. Fee, if I only had the assurance that James was called of *God*, I would feel that something *must be done*." To this Bro. Fee replied, "I believe if there is a man that can tell whether a man is called to preach or not, I can. Now you stay here this afternoon and visit with Mrs. Fee, and I'll just drop into the shop and have a talk with James, and I think I can tell you when I come back."

When Bro. Fee returned, tea was waiting and so was this anxious mother. She met the pastor on the porch, and his greeting was this; "*Sister Bitler, James is a chosen vessel. Start him immediately.*"

The next day Mrs. Bitler received an answer to the letter sent to Rev. Mr. Clayton. He said, "Tell him to start to school and I will give him ten dollars per month for going." (All of which, during his college course, Mr. B. was enabled to refund to his benefactor.)

Thus the problem of time and money began

to be solved, and the young student at once entered the High School at Piqua.

Having but little knowledge of books it would have been impossible for him to maintain a standing in this school, but through the extreme kindness of Prof. Wm. Richardson, then Principal of the school—but now Sup't of the Public Schools at Chillicothe—he was aided by extra help to sustain himself in the advanced classes. He often speaks gratefully of this kindness on the part of the Professor, and desires that it be recorded in these pages.

Here he was prepared for the University at Delaware, and in the fall of 1872 his mother removed with the family to that city, where they continued to reside until he graduated in 1878. Hindrances were removed. Providential occurrences reversed the order of support, and he was obliged to accumulate a debt of gratitude by depending on his mother during his collegiate course. The long cherished dream of being able to support her had not yet been realized, and he had made the same failure that we all make, when we try to *get even with a good mother.*



CHAPTER II.

Biography Continued.

QUALIFICATIONS, URBANA CAMP-MEETING, A DIVINE ANOINTING, PARTIAL ESTIMATE OF THE SUBJECT, FIRST ATTEMPTS AT PUBLIC SPEAKING, LICENSED TO PREACH, FIRST SERMON.

During his father's lifetime, and through all that long period in which he was engaged in praying that his son might become a minister of the gospel, he had not seen one encouraging indication that his desire was to be gratified. But James, even before his conversion, in his association with men in various employments, was given to see phases of human nature that he has since been able to utilize in his work. While vacillating somewhat he was always busy. Serving short terms at wagon-making, coopering, painting, clerking, first in a grocery and then in a dry goods store, and finally serving an apprenticeship as a tin-smith, he was thrown into company with a variety of men and made familiar with their modes of life and thought. He regards the experience of these years an important

factor of his education, since it has greatly facilitated his efforts to reach the masses. Among the many contributions that served to prepare him for the work in which he has since been engaged, we must mention one prominent item of experience, which next to that of his conversion, has served to qualify him for it.

He was among the many, that kindled a torch at the first great Urbana Camp-meeting of 1872. The Green street church of Piqua had taken charge of the large boarding house at that meeting, and Bro. Bitler was among the number of young people assisting in that work. The doctrines promulgated at that meeting were regarded, by most of the company, with a degree of hostility. He was especially opposed to them, and at first antagonized them bitterly. But as the meeting went on from day to day, and the light increased, his prejudices vanished. One evening while listening to a clear, forcible presentation of the theme of holiness, by Rev. Wm. McDonald, he yielded fully to the truth, and walked right out into the sunlight of full salvation, without a struggle. This experience was something of a surprise to himself, for knowing that he was possessed of a sanguine temperament, and somewhat emotional in the various phases of past experience, he had expected that when the blessing came it

would be attended with a gush of feeling commensurate with the grace bestowed. But instead of the fierce dynamics of emotional ecstasy, it was more like the liberation of Peter, when on the night of his deliverance, he was so quickly roused from sleep, and walked out into the open air, that he "wist not that it was true which was done by the angel," but, "when he was come to himself," he knew "of a surety" that the Lord had done this thing. While the Holy Spirit had thus worked silently He had nevertheless worked powerfully, and the peace and quiet of that hour only preceded the coming of a pentecostal manifestation an hour later. Having returned to the hotel, and while seated with a group of friends, the power of God was manifested in a remarkable manner. Among the company was one of the most fashionable and formal ladies of Piqua, a distiller's wife; also a lady of a very positive character, who was the daughter of a very devout christian. The topic of conversation was that which dominated the meetings, and these ladies appealing to Mr. Bitler said, "Jim what do you think?" He replied that he had gotten into the light, but it was vastly different from what he had imagined. It was quiet and gentle as the falling dew. Learning this, the lady last named said, "Well, it would never do for me to be sanctified,

for I'd shout, and that I'll never do." With that, she fell on her knees, threw up her hands, and began shouting at the top of her voice. Then followed a scene that is almost indescribable. All the company fell before God, and the distiller's wife, glittering in jewelry, was on her knees and crying for mercy with all her might. While this cloud covered them, James arose and received his portion; and though the hour was late and the camp had become quiet for the night, it was very soon "noised abroad" and "the multitude came together," and amid the general rejoicing hundreds were soon shaking hands and praising God. This scene was but one of the many marvelous evidences of the presence of God at that great camp-meeting. It has since become historic, and out from its pentecostal baptisms of power have gone waves of influence that have rocked churches, camp-meetings, and conferences. Brother Bitler, along with others of the "school of the prophets" was thus anointed with that indispensable qualification of the Holy Spirit for the work of the ministry; and though not always able to distinguish its exact relation to his success in winning souls, as compared with the grace he received at conversion, it nevertheless supplemented his former experience with greater faith, warmer zeal, and a closer intimacy with God;

and vain would be the attempt to unravel these related qualifications, so as to discover the ratio of the one to the other.

His natural qualifications for the work of an evangelist, must not be lost sight of, in any attempt to account for the results attending his labors. These are by no means inconsiderable, and to ignore them, is not necessary to an adequate appreciation of the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing about results. In calling some to be "Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers," God certainly had respect to their natural or mental qualifications, and these abounding to a greater or less degree must have materially affected their efficiency. We believe with Dr. J. O. Peck, who very aptly says in an article on Revivals in the Christian Advocate, that "*God can't bless nothing.*" The fact that God chooses "the weak things of the world to confound the mighty," cannot be interpreted to mean that he chooses either weak faith, or weak-minded men, to bring sinners to Christ. The statement that "not many mighty, not many noble are called," does not refer to a call to the ministry. True, mighty men, like stars of the first magnitude, are few in number. But the relative number of that degree, that are blazing in the galaxy of the gospel min-

istry, will compare favorably with any of the learned professions, and any well informed thinker would resent the imputation that an ordinary interpretation puts on this passage. If ignorance and inefficiency were qualifications for successful evangelism it would be strange — on such an interpretation of the many weaklings who are called — if the millennium had not come before this. The history of the past is constantly repeated, and among the number that yield to God and accept the Savior, not many that occupy places of prominence, or positions of power, are willing to leave their high seats and come down to the terms of salvation. But while the lofty and the great are proudly rejecting the offers of heaven, God is constantly calling men from the cradle, and raising up now and then a genius of his own ; and the ratio of the great to the small, loses nothing when contrasted with any of the intellectual forces that are making and moving the world.

The sensitive jealousy for the work of the Holy Spirit, that affects to despise the natural abilities of an evangelist, utterly ignores the fact that St. Paul is without a peer either in the Apostolic College or out of it, and that his transcendent genius fitly qualified him for his cosmopolitan mission. The glory of God is not compromised by this admission, for God made *him*, and then

by the fiery baptisms of the Holy Spirit upon him, and attending his ministry, he made the most out of him. Men of small talents may succeed beyond our expectations, but a mere emotional ninny is as far from being a special medium for the operation of the Holy Spirit, as is a rope of sand from being a good conductor of electricity. We once heard a man, who had cried and laughed under the mystic wand of John B. Gough for nearly two hours, say, that Gough was not a great orator because he could understand everything he said. A Finney, a Moody, a Harrison or a Bitler, without special mental endowments of a very high order would be as useless to accomplish great results in the work of soul-saving, as a Wesley or a Wm. Taylor to organize, manage and sustain an empire of Christian instrumentalities without a corresponding amount of constructive genius.

It is not our purpose to furnish any comprehensive estimate of the natural abilities, or peculiar genius, of the subject of this volume. We leave that to later pens, and out of deference to his own request we forbear. Perhaps a post mortem estimate will do justice to a subject that we are forbidden fully to treat, and if so, the author is quite sure that the above suggestions will find abundant illustration in the subject. At all events

Mr. Bitler's educational, spiritual, and natural, qualifications, combine in wonderful harmony to facilitate the success which has attended his labors, and both the providence and the Spirit of God, seem to have been displayed in preparing him for the work of an evangelist.

FIRST ATTEMPTS.

From the first he took for his models successful impromptu speakers, and with an ease that was natural he began to speak "off-hand," and was ready on all occasions to say what was in his mind, just as readily as if he had taken the pains to confine himself to a written discourse, or had memorized it from the beginning. Discarding both these methods, the habit of extemporizing became a luxury, and on going to Delaware he began at once to exhort, and very soon to preach and deliver addresses, in and about the city. Though variously criticised for so doing, public speaking had a charm for him, and the work to which he felt called could not be entirely deferred until his education at the University was completed. He spoke to the colored people, the Germans, and wherever he could get an audience. Made appointments at country churches and school-houses. Was in the habit of holding mass meetings in the country, where in company with

other students he sometimes enjoyed a "field day." Occasionally during vacation he visited camp-meetings and took part in the services.

Whether the occasion was a camp-meeting, a Sunday School celebration, or a protracted meeting, he moved in an element most agreeably adapted to his temperament and genius when occupying the rostrum.

His first Sunday School speech was delivered in Liberty Church, near Delaware, at a S. S. Institute, under the auspices of the Y. M. C. A., with Prof. T. C. O'Kane as the manager. It was there that Rev. F. A. Gould, now of the North Ohio Conference and stationed at Cleveland, made his maiden speech. Besides these, other students that have since become efficient ministers made characteristic speeches. Notably: Rev. A. Gilruth, now a missionary in South India; Rev. N. Luccock, now a member of the Pittsburg Conference.

Though previously licensed to exhort—which, by the way, is usually interpreted by young ecclesiastics to be a license to do almost anything in the line of preaching except to take a text—he was licensed to preach by the Rev. S. A. Keene, then Pastor of St. Paul's Church, in company with Rev. T. A. Turner, now of the Ohio Conference, on the 10th day of February, 1875.

The young men were not long in availing themselves of the privilege of taking *one* text, instead of a part of a chapter as heretofore, and of the further luxury of pronouncing the benediction.

Mr. Bitler's first *sermon* was preached at Wood Grove Church near Delaware, where he was then Superintendent of the Sunday School, and his text was taken from Ps. 37:3. "Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land and verily thou shalt be fed." A text that was to be illustrated and verified in his subsequent career as an evangelist.



CHAPTER III.

Evangelistic and Regular Work.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS, REVIVALS AT OSTRANDER AND FLINT, REMARKABLE INCIDENTS, OLIVE GREEN, APPOINTED TO CARTHAGE, HARRISON, WESTWOOD, AND WESTWARD.

Bro. Bitler's first impressions concerning the evangelistic field were laid in the earlier efforts of his ministry, and grew more intense as the indications of a providential call became more marked.

His first work in that direction was during his student life at Delaware. At a place called *Ostrander*, where there were two churches, a Methodist and a Presbyterian, both of which were idle, He went to work for a revival. Saloons were flourishing, drinking was very prevalent, and it was a hard field. But the Lord gave him a few souls, and a class was organized, and the next year it was taken into a circuit as an appointment.

The next year he was invited to assist at a meeting being held at an appointment called *Flint*. Rev. A. R. Miller had conducted a meeting, with some conversions, but after laboring there about four weeks he was obliged to leave for another

appointment. After the earnest solicitation of the people, but against the wishes of the Faculty, Bro. Bitler went to the meeting with the intention of remaining one week. But at the end of that week forty persons had united with the church, and thirty-one were at the altar seeking the Lord. He remained there five weeks, and at the close, one hundred and sixteen had been converted and joined the church. Taking into consideration all the facts, this was a marvelous meeting and deserves comparison with the great revivals he has since held. It was a country appointment. The church was built in a low swampy district where there were no pikes, and it was in the springtime when the going was miserable, and moreover under the shadow of a Universalist church that had poisoned the whole community. It was there he received the title of the "Young Evangelist," and his impressions were deepened concerning a call to that special work.

There were many marked cases of conviction and conversion at that meeting, that deserve to be recorded. We give but two.

Mr. B—— lived on a farm near the church. He was a large hearted generous fellow, but had become very much addicted to drink. So much so, that he had become involved financially, and was fast bringing sorrow to his excellent family.

Many of his friends had been converted but B. held out against all persuasion, and it was very difficult to get him to the church at all. After various fruitless attempts to reach him, it was agreed among his friends and the evangelist, that they make him a special subject of prayer. While they were unitedly pleading with God for him, Mr. B. became very uneasy, and determined to leave. He went to Columbus hoping to evade his convictions, but darkness covered him. He went into a saloon in an obscure quarter, where he had never been before, and called for whisky. While talking to the bar-keeper, his voice attracted the attention of an acquaintance who was a prominent lawyer of the city, but very dissipated, and who said, "My God, B., are you here?" "This startled Mr. B., who replied, "Yes, I'm here, why do you talk that way?" "Because," said the lawyer, "I had an awful dream about you last night. I dreamed that you ought to be a better man, and it so worried me, that I told my wife, twice during the night, that I had a notion to get up and write to you." Mr. B. was so fully convinced that this was of the Lord that he replied, "They're praying for me all over the country up there." His friend advised him to go home at once, and join the church, and he surrendered on the spot, saying, "I will." He sat

down at a card table sobbing, and using that as an altar of prayer, he gave his heart to God and found Christ. The old toppers gathered round him, and told him to go and join the church. They said, "That's just what we all ought to do." With that, his friend followed him as he went to the door, and said, "B., for God's sake don't touch another drop." But B. replied, "The Lord bless you, I wouldn't touch it if the street was full of it, I don't want it." He started up the main street, laughing and crying as he went, passers-by staring at him as though he were crazy, as doubtless they supposed he was. He soon found his way to the house of a relative who was religious, and went in laughing and crying. When this relative met him, she said, "Why B., what's the matter?" He replied, "I guess I've got religion." She said in response, "I know you have," and then a scene of mutual rejoicing followed. From thence he went to the home of his brother in the same peculiar frame of mind and told him the same story. But the brother said he was drunk, and as soon as he was sober he would be all right. The next morning he was as happy and bright as before, and so anxious was he to get home and join the church that he went to the depot an hour before the time. When he got home he told everybody from the R. R.

station to his house what had happened, and the same evening, before the preaching service began, he told the congregation his remarkable experience. This was a marvelous case in many respects. The legal friend knew nothing of his state of mind, nor of the meeting in progress. That God should employ such remote yet powerful means to arrest another sinner simply illustrates the mysterious operations of the Holy Spirit in answering prayer.

Another case which occurred at that meeting illustrates the same marvelous operations of the Holy Spirit in convicting and arresting an obdurate sinner. *John McR*— was an adept with the violin, and fiddled for the dancing fraternity in all that region. He belonged to a family that were great dancers, and could have an independent dance at home, or load up a two horse wagon and contribute a whole dance, music and all, to any gathering in the neighborhood. The Lord got into the family and spoiled things for his purpose. His father, mother, brothers, sisters, nephews and neices—in short, the whole family were converted, and John was left alone. He was not married, or doubtless his wife would have been among the converts. Poor John! what was he to do? He cursed the church, the preacher, and all his relatives, and he was so fearful that he

might get caught himself, that he stayed away from the church almost altogether. The Spirit took hold of him however, and such was the depth of his conviction, that he would frequently wake up in the night and find himself praying. Then he would turn over and curse awhile, as if to offset the prayer. His was one of the cases, that remind us of instances in the Scriptures, where the devils rent and tore the men they possessed just before they were compelled to depart. One night he secured a pint of whisky and went to a dance at some place near Columbus, and spent the night in revelry. The next evening it was raining and snowing, one of the most disagreeable nights that could well be imagined; such a night as would spoil anything but a revival. John concluded that the people would be kept away, and that there wouldn't be much interest, if any, and he thought it would be perfectly safe for him to venture, and so went to the meeting.

At that meeting Mr. B—— above referred to, gave his testimony, and along with others witnessed to the saving power of God. Presently a man rose up from the back seat and said, "I'm not a Christian, but I want you to pray for me." That man was John McR——. He joined the church that night, and the next morning in a speaking meeting he was converted. It is related

of him that when the collection was being taken he said, "boys, here goes the fiddler's money in the preacher's basket," so that he at once gave evidence of that sort of genuine conversion that touches the pocket. Nine years later as Bro. Bitler was passing along the street at Columbus, he saw a man in a wagon that seemed to wear a familiar look. As the evangelist approached his smiling face he said to him, "Is this Jno. McR?"—and so it proved. When he asked him if he was on the road to heaven he said, "Yes, and so is my wife." That meeting at Flint had not only reached his relatives, but at the same time secured the conversion of the lady that afterward became his wife, and thus had completely wrecked the old associations and created things anew. Incidents peculiarly interesting characterized that revival, and at its close it was found that the church was altogether too small for the wants of the increased family, so one end of the structure was taken out and an addition built to it. There it stands to this day a monument of that marvelous revival. Closing his labors here, Bro. Bitler consented to spend some time in a meeting at *Westerville*, where some fruit was gathered. Returning again to Delaware he was glad to rest and spend the summer vacation recuperating. His labors had been arduous and exhausting, but

with relaxation and rest he was ready for work again.

During his Senior year he supplied *Olive Green*, a sort of practicing Mecca, where quite a number of young men that have since become useful ministers began their itinerant career. Notably, Rev. S. A. Keene; Rev. J. J. Henry—who was afterward translated at the close of a great revival in Bucyrus; Rev. F. A. Gould of the North Ohio Conference, and Rev. S. D. Hutsinpillar, now stationed at Third Avenue, Columbus.

Graduating in 1878, he joined the Cincinnati Conference in the fall of that year. The Conference met at Green street church, Piqua, O., his former home, so that coming back to the place of beginning he was glad to renew former associations and start afresh on his mission.

His first appointment was *Carthage*, just out of the city of Cincinnati. At the close of this year, September 7, 1879, at the Conference held at Urbana, O., he was ordained Deacon by Bishop Simpson. The next year he was sent to *Harrison*, where on July 1, 1880, he married Miss Mina, daughter of Dr. M. L. and Susan J. Thomas. Harrison was a weak charge, able only to support a single man, and this step necessitated a change. So the next year he was appointed to *Westwood*. In addition to the main

charge at Westwood was a small appointment three miles out called *Dent*. The church at the latter place had almost died out, but Bro. Bitler thought he saw a chance to do some evangelistic work there, and went to work accordingly. The result was more than one hundred conversions, and to-day it is one of the strongest country charges in all that region.

At the close of his second year at Westwood he was ordained Elder, September 10, 1882, at Dayton, O., by Bishop Bowman.

At his own request, and by the consent of his Presiding Elder, he left this appointment at the end of two years and a half, and at the next Conference was recorded as "*Missionary to Dakota.*"



CHAPTER IV.

Missionary to Dakota.

CHAMBERLAIN. SICKNESS. DEATH. FINAL ABANDONMENT OF THE FIELD. NO MORE "PLANS." HOME AGAIN. REVIVALS AT THIRD STREET, COLUMBUS; AND MAIN STREET, CHILLICOTHE.

In the spring of 1883 Brother Bitler went to Dakota as a Missionary, under the impression that the great wild West, so vast in resources, and yet so illy supplied with Christian ministers was the very field for him.

In correspondence with the Superintendent of the Mission he was informed that the field he desired was open to him. He was directed to go to Chamberlain, an ambitious town that was rapidly rising, and where they would pay the right man a salary of one thousand dollars.

This was something definite and relieved all fears of being set down with a wife and child in the barrenness of the wild prairies.

Believing that providence indicated the step, his heart sent him, and though accredited and indorsed by the church, he paid his own travel-

ing expenses, and was soon *en route* for the great northwest.

All the romance of this venture was soon to be dissipated. Locating at Chamberlain he found that most of the items that were to be forthcoming if the "right man" went, were in an undeveloped state or wholly imaginary. The town was only about two years old and contained about one thousand inhabitants. There was no church edifice, no parsonage; just twelve members of the church, and they too poor to pay a hundred dollars. But the "missionary" was not to be deterred. His heroic blood was stirred. He found himself in the midst of a wide-awake community many of whom wore a rough exterior, but beneath all this he soon found a degree of refinement that would grace any latitude of civilization. It was the front of that great advancing wave that scattered warm blood and active brains all through the northwest. He purchased a lot, built a house, and sent for his wife, who with their little daughter *Grace*, soon joined him in the new field. But the Dakota enterprise was destined to be a series of disappointments. His wife was taken sick soon after and for weeks lay at the threshold of death. In her enfeebled condition she was placed on a feather bed and brought back to Ohio. But Brother

Bitler was not to be defeated; so leaving her at home he returned to Dakota the second time. Three weeks later he attended the Conference at Huron, and while there he received a telegram that the baby, born in Dakota, was dead. He returned at once to Ohio to comfort his sorrowing wife and look on the grave of his dead child. But the mission was not to be relinquished. His wife meanwhile regained sufficient strength to return with him, and once more he went back to Dakota. He was so bent on holding the field that he determined to stay in spite of everything—sickness, poverty and death, not excepted.

But at last he was obliged to succumb to the inevitable lot that seemed to follow him. His wife grew worse, and becoming a helpless invalid, it was soon apparent that she could never recover in the climate of Dakota. So with a heavy heart he relinquished his cherished scheme and once more turned his face to Ohio.

The mission was not altogether fruitless as we shall see in another place, but it was a costly appointment to Brother Bitler, and must ever remain associated in his memory with some of the saddest pages of the past. En route for home with a heavy heart, under the conviction that he had made a mistake, and that possibly the scheme was not of God, but of himself, he fervently

said "*I'll never have another plan.*" This resolution left him empty handed, but with a strong reliance on the providence of God to furnish all his future patterns. Time and eternity may reveal the Dakota mission a Divine providence, even though the sequel seemed so desolate when he returned. His mother resided at Columbus and he came directly to her home. But he was not long to be idle, for, the second day after landing at Columbus he met Rev. A. B. Riker, then stationed at *Third Street* charge, who informed him that he was going to begin a series of meetings with a "watch-night" service, and invited him to join in the work by getting "under the other end of the yoke." In response to this he went, and soon becoming enthused, these brethren jointly laid their plans for a great work. God was with them and the revival began. Soon the daily papers began to note the interest awakened and spoke of Brother Bitler as an evangelist from the Cincinnati Conference. He remained with Brother Riker eight weeks, and with the large audience room nightly crowded and hundreds going away for want of room, the work went on grandly, until more than two hundred souls were converted.

Soon as this work began to be *noised abroad* Brother Bitler was besieged with invitations to

assist other brethren in revival work, and among them Rev. T. A. Turner, an old College friend, then stationed at Main Street, Chillicothe. Accepting this call he joined Brother Turner without losing a day. The Pastor had spent seven weeks holding the meetings, with success, and preparing the way for what was to come. The work broke out afresh at once. On the first Sabbath afternoon when an opportunity was given, a few rose immediately for prayers, then others followed, until the whole congregation stood up. When the altar was presented, every one in the house came to it or as near to it as they could get. It was a marvelous meeting. Sobs and pleas for mercy soon gave way to shouts of rejoicing, and before the service closed thirteen persons professed conversion. Some of the older members who had witnessed many meetings of power in the past, testified that they had never seen any to compare with that one. In anticipation of the great work that followed, the pastor's faith, which called for two hundred souls, was marvelous in the eyes of the people; but the number finally reached over four hundred.

Brother Bitler had expected to stay two weeks at Main Street but he remained six weeks, and the revival was without a parallel in the history of Chillicothe Methodism, unless we except one

that was held there forty years before, under the labors of Rev. John Miley, D.D., now of Drew Theological Seminary.

A brief review of Brother Bitler's career, as recorded in the foregoing pages, if degrees of success are to be taken as indications of Providence, would certainly lead any practical thinker to the conclusion that his is the evangelistic field. In every instance when he has stepped aside from the regular work and made revivals a specialty he has been greatly blessed of God and crowned with success.



CHAPTER V.

Fishing on the Banks of the Missouri.

CHARLES H. GILMORE.

THE CONVERTED COMEDIAN IN A NEW ROLE.

Of Brother Bitler's missionary labors in Dakota we said but little in the previous chapter. Through the gloom that covers his Dakota experience, at least one star shines. The mission was not a failure, and the instance here given is enough to vindicate his choice of that field if nothing else had come of it. In looking after the lost sheep of that wilderness, he visited a shanty where he found a lady at the very difficult task of trying to do two things at once, viz: rocking the baby and ironing at the same time. In reply to his inquiries she said that she was a Christian and a Methodist. This agreeable surprise led him to ask about her husband, whom she said was far from being a christian, and she seemed to be greatly troubled about his soul. His name was Gilmore. He was the boatman, and it was his business to ferry persons across the

river to a place called the "Brule Agency," about five miles below Chamberlain. His passengers were landed on the other shore and then returning with his skiff he was obliged to recross the river and tow it back to the village, as the swiftness of the current made it difficult to row the boat against the stream. Mr. G. presented a very rough exterior, and with coarse clothing, long hair, shaggy beard, clad in over-alls and with a rope—not exactly around his neck—but over his shoulder tugging away at his boat, Mr. Bitler had once met him on the banks of the river.

Ever since the time that Peter said I go a fishing, and the disciples said we also go with thee, almost the whole apostolic succession have had a very strong inclination to chime in with these disciples. What preacher has never gone a fishing? As a class they seem to be as fond of fish as of fowl (?) Mr. Bitler's first view of Gilmore was had while spending a leisure hour in this sort of recreation on the banks of the Missouri river. With this casual meeting in mind, he was very much surprised when Mrs. G. happened to remark that her husband was very fond of reading, and it was this newly discovered fact that he intended to use in taking Gilmore from the slough of sin. So the next time he met Mr. G. he expressed his agreeable surprise that he was fond of books and

offered him the use of his library. Mr. G. further enlightened the preacher by saying that he had a "sheep-skin"—meaning a diploma—and moreover, that he had been a short-hand reporter; had reported for the District Court of Iowa, receiving eight dollars per day, and also for a time had been a reporter for certain newspapers in Chicago. He excused his present occupation on the ground that he had weak lungs and came to Dakota and began to row a boat for the physical benefit he might derive from it. This ingenious statement seemed very plausible, but it was not the truth. The fact was that he was in Dakota just as he had been in almost every State and Territory in the Union before; running away from God.

He had traveled through all the New England States except Maine, visited every other Territory except Oregon and Washington Territory; gone to Mexico and Central America, and once shipped for Australia, in the desperate endeavor to divert his convictions of duty. But with various experiences in steamboating, railroading, painting, surveying, reporting, acting and boating, the early impressions of duty haunted his life. Once shipwrecked, once disabled so that the loss of his voice threw him from the stage, he had gone to Dakota to start a saloon and cover up the last spark of this expiring flame.

When but a lad he had dreamed that he was at the bar of God and saw the right and left hand throng awarded with the allotments of destiny, and that an angel had conveyed him back to his bed with the injunction that he should tell what he had seen.

This so weighed upon his mind that he told his mother, and she took him to her closet and prayed very earnestly that God might make his duty plain, and help him to do it. While there on his knees the thought that he was called to preach dawned upon him and he inwardly vowed that he would never do it. Soon after this he ran away from home, began a series of wanderings above described. The force of his mother's prayers seemed to follow him and on several occasions the dream of his boyhood was repeated; but in the face of all this, feeling that he could not be converted unless he would consent to preach, he vowed that he would not be converted, and that if he went to hell he would abide by the consequences. Another chief factor of his life was a praying wife. She never deserted him, and in spite of his varied experiences he had always been true to his marriage vow, and he loved her intensely and respected her piety with veneration.

When he went to Dakota with the saloon idea in mind she little dreamed of his intentions. But

on making the discovery, all her heroism came to the front, and though she had clung to him with the fondness of despair, this was too much, and she told him that she did not marry a saloon-keeper, that she would not live with one, and that if he went into that business they were henceforth not one but two. This very decided stand soon put an end to the project, as he thought more of his wife than of a saloon. Later adventures need not be recited, except that his appetite for intoxicating liquors had led his wife to expostulate with him for frequenting the saloon, and further to say that if he *would* drink, to keep it in the house and drink it at home. This he did and for some time kept a five gallon cask in the cellar. One day, while his wife had gone to church and he was at home taking care of the baby, he took the child in his arm and the lamp in his hand and went into the cellar for some whisky, and the child unaccustomed to these dark surroundings quit crying and its very stillness attracted his attention. Looking into the face of the little one the thought came to his mind "what if I knew that my little boy should ever become such a man as I am." The possibility of such a fate was too horrible to endure, and seizing an ax that had been left in the cellar, he blazed away at the cask and

knocked in the head, and with the contents running on the floor he took up the lamp and child and returned to the room with the resolution to drink no more. Though afterward tempted he kept this resolution faithfully. So that even before the evangelist met him the Spirit of God had begun the work of reformation. His subsequent deliverance from the *desire* for intoxicants is to be dated from his conversion. When Mr. Bitler proffered him the use of books he very thankfully accepted the kindness and soon gave proof of the fact that he was an omnivorous reader.

He never went to church and when Mr. Bitler on one occasion urged him to go with him he replied :

“Elder, you know I never go to church, and you’ll have to excuse me. I’ll take care of the baby and let my wife go.”

To this they both objected, and after some persuasion Gilmore said :

“Go ahead Elder, and I’ll be down after while.”

When the service was about half through Gilmore came in and surprised the preacher by the fact that he sang as if he was used to it. His surprise was greater when on retiring from the room he found Gilmore waiting for him, and on the way home he said :

“Mr. Bitler, do you believe that a man is ever called to do anything?”

“What do you mean, said Bitler, called to preach?”

“Yes.”

“I certainly do, he replied, or I wouldn't be out here.”

“So do I,” said Gilmore, “or I wouldn't be out here.”

This led the way to a full disclosure of much that is recited above, and after accepting an invitation to come in, and both had gone into the house, as Gilmore stood there in the presence of his wife who alone knew the secret of the past, Mr. Bitler said:

“Gilmore, you know you ought to be a Christian. You must surrender now. This is the supreme moment of your life, and I shall not leave here till you give your heart to God.”

This was ten o'clock Saturday night, and Gilmore afterward said that on hearing that, he thought he had a boarder. But throwing his arm about his neck and crying upon his breast, Mr. Bitler plead with him to say “YES.”

“Say yes, and I'll have a word of prayer.”

Gilmore replied: “Pray anyhow.”

And they did pray. The preacher plead as never before; the wife prayed, and Mr. Bitler said to Gilmore: “Are you praying?”

“Yes. Pray on.”

Again and again he asked: “Do you yield now?”

But the answer came: “No, but pray on.”

Finally Gilmore cried out in desperation:

“By God——,” and pausing just there, it seemed like profanity, but at last he cried out:

“By God’s help, I’ll be a better man!”

The point was yielded. The surrender was complete, the prodigal was forgiven, and the next moment in the arms of his faithful wife both were rejoicing in the love of God.

They sang, “Praise God from whom all blessings flow,” and Mr. Bitler went home.

A family altar was erected, and at the week day meeting that followed, Gilmore told of his conversion to God. The following Sunday night, by Mr. Bitler’s appointment, Gilmore was announced to speak in the Opera House. But on the Friday before the time appointed his aged father and mother who had not seen him for a long time, very unexpectedly came to see him, and when he told his mother of the salvation he had found, the glad tidings nearly overcame her. Religion had worked a transformation, and when Sunday night came, with newly shaven face, and hair cut, and dressed in a new suit which his father had brought with him as a present for his

son, he looked like a gentleman. But best of all, there sat the father and mother in that audience to hear the story from the lips of their wandering boy. He began by saying that he little thought in all the past that he should ever stand where he stood that night and speak for Christ in an Opera House. His travels in many lands and his efforts to escape conscience and duty were recited. He said that he had tried to be an infidel, but added "I could never silence the voice in my soul." In concluding he said:

"If there were no future, the smile on my old mother's face when she heard the story of my conversion, would more than repay me for the consecration I have made."

Shortly after this Mr. Bitler was compelled to return to Ohio. More than a year had elapsed and he knew nothing more of Gilmore. While engaged in a revival at Corning, Ohio, he chanced to narrate these facts to Rev. Benjamin Green, then in charge of the church at that place, and suggested that Gilmore, who could handle a banjo to perfection, might, if he was in one of our large cities, sing up a crowd of thousands and preach the gospel to vast multitudes of people. Bro. Green said, send for him. But now came the serious and awful question that confronts every young convert, viz. : has he been faithful

to the heavenly calling? Bro. Green had faith in him and said :

“Write and tell him to come. I'll pay his expenses from Dakota.”

The letter was sent and an answer written the day it was received. Gilmore said :

“Tell Mr. Green to send the money, I will receive it as a loan, and I will be with you as soon as the will of God and steam will bring me.”

The next day after sending this letter, Gilmore received one from the National Tube Works containing two Palace Car tickets to New Orleans and the request that he take his banjo and thus represent that firm at the Exposition. The compensation was to be three dollars and a half per day from date of his leaving until his return to Dakota.

This offer had many attractions, but none equal to the sense of a divine mission, so returning the tickets he politely declined the offer, and turned his face to Ohio.

On reaching his mother's home in Iowa he tarried a short time, and taking both her advice, and his own view of propriety, he hung the banjo up on the wall in his mother's kitchen and pursued his journey.

Arriving at Corning, he found that Mr. Bitler

had gone to Gallipolis. Weary from travel and loss of sleep, with no time or opportunity to allay his hunger, he was taken to the church where it was expected that he would preach. Here was a dilemma. He had never been in a revival. He had never preached. To begin where Bitler left off, and conduct a series of meetings was out of the question. It was a dreary, rainy night, and everything contributed to his discomfiture. He was in for it, and there was no train out of Corning that night. Tempted to retreat he remembered the text that "No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." This fixed his purpose to do the best he could and he went at it. During his brief stay here the Lord gave him some seals to his ministry. Tramping through the mud he began by personal labor to persuade men, and was happy in seeing some fruit. Visiting the mines he saw souls converted to God under ground. From Corning he went to Rehobeth —, from there to Gallipolis, where he joined Brother Bitler in that marvelous revival, and spent a week, doing effective service and learning something about revival methods. Accepting an invitation to go to Huntington, West Virginia, he began a series of meetings under difficulties and embarrass-

ments that very soon discovered themselves, both in the church and out of it. But implicit faith in God, and untiring zeal both in the pulpit and among the people, soon began to be rewarded with fruit. Thirty-eight church letters were gathered in and one hundred and sixty-one professed conversion. Since he left Huntington the meeting has continued and the whole number now reported is two hundred and fifty. Bro. Gilmore came to Circleville by invitation during our great revival, and by his testimony and labors gave proof of his ministry by contributing to its results.

A previous account of his surroundings and tragic conversion had led us to expect that his personal appearance and general demeanor would not be very commendable to refined tastes. In this we were agreeably disappointed. Strange to say he seemed a perfect gentleman of some refinement, and his deliberation and ease in public address, together with his modest and manly bearing in smaller circles, made us almost to feel like apologizing for our previous impressions.

From Circleville he went to Cuyahoga Falls to assist the Pastor, Rev. J. R. Keys. The meeting resulted in fifty conversions and forty-three accessions to the church. In response to a letter addressed to Bro. Keys, he writes :

“Bro. Gilmore did good work in this place. Its value cannot be measured by the number of conversions and accessions. Bro. G. went away with the good will of all, both saints and sinners, so far as I know.”

This testimony was not written with a view to its publication, but as a private letter to the author, but we append it as an indication that the Actor is on the right Stage and in the right *role*.



CHAPTER VI.

Weighing Anchor.

SUPPLYING "WESLEY CHAPEL"—EVANGELISTIC IMPRESSIONS—TRANSFERRED TO THE OHIO CONFERENCE—THE CLIMAX OF DECISION—A LOCATION GRANTED.

While at Main Street, Chillicothe, Bro. Bitler received an invitation from the Presiding Elder of the Columbus District to supply an unexpired pastorate at *Wesley Chapel*. This invitation was extended at the unanimous request of the Official Board. The former Pastor, Rev. H. C. Sexton having been transferred to the Troy, a Spring Conference, the charge was left to be supplied until the next session of the Ohio Conference which met in September. Bro. Bitler accepted the invitation, and entering at once upon the duties of a Pastor, he very soon became almost as much engrossed as during the work of revival. Besides preaching, visiting, and looking after the details of the regular work, he gave some time to extra evangelistic labor at the Ohio Conference Camp Meeting. It was during his

brief pastorate of five months at Wesley Chapel that a series of mental struggles concerning his future work was carried on, that only culminated with the close of the year. The location of that church on High street, in the very business heart of the city, gave it a familiar prominence that few others enjoyed; and though its long and useful history was crowded with the splendid triumphs of the Gospel within its walls, yet to Bro. Bitler's stirring spirit, the tramping multitudes that filed by each day and night appealed for radical evangelistic methods other than those usually employed. Surveying the whole field he was profoundly impressed with the fact that the churches were not reaching the masses, and his heart yearned for some method of attracting their attention and pressing upon them the privileges and claims of the Gospel. The measure of success that has since attended his efforts in that direction will appear as we proceed, but it is enough to say in this place that these impressions led him, more than ever before, to conclude that his usefulness might be greatly augmented if he were wholly given to the evangelistic work. When the Cincinnati Conference met he had not yet fully decided the question of duty, and the measure of uncertainty that still overshadowed his mind, led him to wish that the

time might be extended for a final solution of the problem.

His recent work having been done in the bounds of the Ohio Conference, which was to hold its session three weeks later, he requested a transfer to that Conference. The question of Conference relation weighed but little in that request. The transfer gave more time to think and pray, and thus settle the real question which was between the regular or the evangelistic work.

In the interim between the sessions of the Cincinnati and Ohio Conferences the burden became more and more pressing, but a solution of the great problem was soon to be reached. Taking advice from all sources only perplexed it, as all sorts of advice was freely tendered, and though thankfully received, it was only plain that somebody was very greatly mistaken. Mr. Bitler's inclination in no way effected the issue, for the reason that he was not inclined either way, except to do the will of God, and that was the very question to be solved. Men of age and experience, representing a conservative element in the Conference, expressed very grave doubts as to the wisdom of what seemed to them to be an erratic course. Others whose judgment was equally respected, and representing the more radical and aggressive, and perhaps the more

evangelistic, were equally confident that an eccentric orbit was as safe, and perhaps the more direct way to reach and save the people.

The various phases in which evangelistic work, in its relation to the regular Pastorate, had been viewed, was bound to come to the front in open conference. It may interest the reader to know that two very marked and distinct views are held by the ministry on the subject of evangelists. It would be a gross misrepresentation of the truth to intimate that even a small minority of the Methodist ministry are opposed to the revivals. Such is not the case; but some difference of opinion prevails with reference to the utility of evangelists, other than, and distinct from, the regular pastorate. One class looking with a good degree of solicitude upon the tendency toward an irregular ministry, and another rejoicing in the multiplication of agencies, whether regular or not. It cannot be overlooked, that in some cases, irregularities and unfortunate occurrences have attended the efforts of unauthorized evangelists. A class of men whose eccentricities of doctrine and method have blighted the healthy growth of religious life. The field is large, and there is nothing to prevent any self-constituted champion of vagaries and error to set up his banners and kindle a wild fire in the

name of Christianity. No ecclesiastical tribunal holds him responsible, and none can call him to account. This fact admitted, has had a tendency to beget very diverse opinions. It has to some extent thrown a shadow, very unjustly we think, upon the evangelists as a class; and there are not wanting men in the regular pastorate, who taking an indiscriminate view freely avow their animosity toward evangelists. Others again, regarding the abuse as a mere exception, are fervently in favor of and ready discriminately to defend them. It may be remarked however, that in the Methodist Episcopal Church there has been a growing tendency toward a recognition of these abuses, and a demand for some adequate protection against independent and self-constituted evangelists. This prevailing sentiment has led many to seek a remedy that would protect the church, at least, and do no violence to the revival spirit.

But this very agreement has been the ground prior of a difference that showed itself just to the last General Conference. A very large representation of the ministry of the more aggressive type, regarding the work of special evangelists as of divine order and appointment, sought to enlist the General Conference in a plan by which special evangelists might be ap-

pointed from year to year as are regular pastors, thus endorsing their work, and at the same time rendering them amenable to an Annual Conference. In this way it was supposed that the spirit of evangelism might be utilized, the field of aggressiveness enlarged, the evangelist accredited and endorsed, and the church protected from irregular and irresponsible men. On the other hand, all that is urged against evangelists as a class was urged against any step looking toward an innovation in favor of irregular work. The whole controversy seems still to slumber. It does not appear to have been brought to a definite issue at the General Conference.

Whatever the future may have in store, we only know that this question of polity is a restless one, and at the last session of the Ohio Annual Conference, representatives of the various views above indicated, were ready to interpret Bro. Bitler's attitude concerning his proposed step, in the light of his own convictions on the general subject. Exactly at twelve o'clock on Monday, September 29, it was announced that Bro. J. S. Bitler requested a location, and it was further stated that this request was made that he might enter *the evangelistic work*.

The request for a location was in no way extraordinary, but the purpose made known, brought

several questions to the front. The same request had been granted in another case during the session, and in this instance, if it had been made on the ground of a simple desire to retire from the regular work from inadaptability, or want of success, or bodily affliction, it would doubtless have been accepted as a judicious way to let the brother down easy. But to spoil a preacher that gave promise of usefulness in the regular pastorate for the sake of a venture, was to many a very injudicious step, hence it was opposed. He had not asked to be appointed Conference Evangelist, but rather to return to the local ranks, expecting and intending that *local*, with him, was to refer to the broadest field he could find. The Bishop took occasion to canvas the subject of evangelistic appointment at some length, and though disavowing any intention to reflect unfavorable upon Bro. Bitler's case, it cannot be denied that his remarks were open to such an interpretation by the more conservative element, and they were well prepared to antagonize the request on the ground of its unwisdom. One brother said very emphatically, "I know Bro. Bitler, and I know that he is mistaken." This was an unexpected shaft; and if human agency could add anything to the almost intolerable cross that was resting upon him by having so recently

decided to take that step, it was made more heavy by such a declaration and others of a similar character from the same source,

Bro. Bitler was summoned to appear at the bar of the Conference, and in response to inquiries, he replied that his request had not been made without a long and earnest struggle; that it was the heaviest cross he had ever been obliged to take up, but that the conviction of duty had been forced upon him that he must enter the evangelistic field, which he felt willing to do for the glory of God.

* Rev. Dr. ———, discovering in these remarks a degree of deference to the wisdom of the Conference, asked the direct question whether or not he would be willing to abide by the decision of the Conference. Bro. Bitler replied that he would cheerfully do so, for he would gladly be relieved of the responsibility of that decision, if the Conference was willing to assume it.

The writer at this point enquired of Bro. Bitler whether he was willing to allow that body to decide a question of conscience for him. To this he replied that he was willing to be relieved from deciding a question of so great importance, and if the Conference chose to assume it he would feel relieved from the obligation and consider it

a Providential indication. A Presiding Elder rose and ironically offered the brother a big circuit as a wide field for his evangelical genius. At this point Rev. John T. Miller came to the rescue as his Presiding Elder, and said; "Brother Bitler is not hunting a place to preach. Be it known to this Conference that a committee from Wesley Chapel waited on him and invited him to become their Pastor for the ensuing year, and moreover, there are plenty of charges that would be glad to have him as Pastor." The Bishop said there was nothing against him in the Cincinnati Conference, and if he had remained, a good appointment would have been given him. One brother wanted to know where he was to get his support—and, perhaps it would have been a pleasure to Bro. Bitler, if just at that time, he could have given the desired information.

Another suggested that he would get in the way of the preachers—but since we have no record of any preacher that has since been run over or jostled out of his pastorate, we may suppose that said brother was prematurely alarmed.

Rev. S. A. Keene, Presiding Elder of the Lancaster District, and under whose pastorate at St. Paul's, Delaware, Bro. Bitler had been licensed to preach, was ready with an enthusiastic endorsement of the man and the proposed departure.

He referred to his work at Third street church, Columbus; and at Main street, Chillicothe; and said, that these revivals had become historic; and moreover, ended with the prophecy, that he verily believed that Bro. Bitler in the evangelistic field would see thousands converted to God.

When the question came to a vote of the Conference it was carried by a very large majority, so much so, that the most sanguine friends of the evangelistic idea construed it as not only a vindication of Bro. Bitler's course, but an endorsement of special evangelistic work itself.

With absolute unity on the subject of *revivals*, their utility and necessity, the question of polity that relates to special evangelists, other than the regularly stationed ministry, has in it some elements that give rise to a difference of sentiment among us; but is it not clearly manifest in the multiplicity of agencies that are increasing with every year, that God Himself is preparing an ultimate solution that will of necessity identify the church more fully with an itinerancy that combines the advantages of the regular pastorate with what is now known as the evangelistic work? We cannot refrain from making the suggestion, that many conservative ministers, who are doing the regular work of pastors with a precision and industry that moves as orderly as well poised ma-

chinery, are not calculated to secure and conduct revivals. Sometimes with abilities that adorn the pulpit, and pastoral gifts that superintend all the details of church work, they not only fail to secure much revival fruit, but their natural conservatism of taste and temperament leads them to discredit and reject the help of an evangelist. These are the very men that need such help. With the coming of a fiery spirit, old methods are laid aside, formalism is melted, and perfunctory ecclesiasticism is jostled out of the pulpit. The field is swept by a storm that purifies the musty air, waters the earth, and leaves new material in its track, out of which the patient pastor may build and beautify to his heart's content. People who are running off after ritualism are on the wrong track. We have plenty of form; we want more fire. Many a man could *mould*, if only the material were *melted*; and if after employing the lense of old forms and methods we have failed to secure a revival, we should welcome the zig zag of an irregular bolt of lightning.



CHAPTER VII.

The Vindication.

REVIVAL AT CORNING—OBSTACLES—POLITICAL EXCITEMENT—REV. BENJAMIN GREEN—WARNINGS. SAVED FROM A DRUNKARD'S GRAVE.

The Ohio Conference had adjourned. The last opportunity to secure a settlement and a salary, for one year at least, had been declined. The young evangelist stood facing all the probabilities of a venture—if indeed to follow an indication of Providence can be called a venture. An uncertain venture it seemed to some who had less faith in his wisdom than in his conscientiousness. But words of cheer were not wanting, and fervent prayers for his success in saving souls were offered by others who indulged the hope that God would vindicate his choice in the conversion of thousands. Besides the number of invitations which he then held to assist the pastors, others were added to the list, and it became evident at once that more doors were open than

he could possibly enter. The field was open before him. Failure would prove him mistaken, and success would vindicate the step he had taken.

The mere personal vindication of any man's choice of a field of labor amounts to nothing. If he is mistaken he is to be pitied, and if he succeeds he will be congratulated.

But there are principles involved in a discussion of the relative methods of soul saving that vitally concern the church, and a vindication of evangelistic agencies may be a proof that Providence most emphatically endorses measures that even good men are frequently found to oppose. The proof of any man's call to a special work must be sought in the results attending his labors. The world cares nothing for convictions, and judges of men and measures on the basis of success. It has no epitaph formen that follow their convictions even to the stake, except that lone word, *failure*.

Even should Bishop Taylor and his heroic band die in the wilds of Africa, his continental purpose for the redemption of that land, would be branded as a *failure*; though by their death they might inspire the heroism of the church for a thousand years. The standard therefore by which the choice of our evangelist is to be

adjudged, is the measure of visible success that is found to attend his labors, over and above the ordinary results of the regular pastorate. Making due allowance for a small skepticism concerning the permanence of his work, after it is duly forgotten that revivals under the regular pastorate are subject to a degree of shrinkage that depends more on the weakness of human nature than the genuineness of gospel methods employed in securing their conversion, this demand for commensurate results in vindication of his choice is very rigid. But, in this case we accept the challenge even on that basis, and proceed to the record of *two* of the most marvelous revivals that ever graced the history of methodism in the regions where they were held. We first preface these two by a brief reference to the revival at *Corning*, which, though not directly connected with them, deserves mention in this account, if only for the reason that the number saved there so far exceeds the general average of revival results in the regular pastorate that we might almost base a vindication of Bro. Bitler's choice on that meeting alone, and fully meet the radical demands intimated above. Corning is a mining town of about three thousand inhabitants, and the fact that it had reached that size without having a methodist church, serves to indicate the low state of morals in that community.

Rev. Benjamin Green, a local preacher, had just built and finished a church at his own expense, and was then supplying the charge as pastor. It was on his invitation that the evangelist went to Corning. This was his first field after Conference, and it proved in many ways, a great trial to his faith. From Wesley Chapel to Corning, into a church that had no sexton, and an occasional turn at building his own fires, was something of a contrast. With very few singers to depend upon, especially at first, and only occasionally an organist, and many other disadvantages, the outlook seemed very unpromising. But he tramped through muddy streets and over the hills in the face of every difficulty, trusting in God for a great revival. To add to his discomfiture he was taken sick on the first Sunday night and verily thought he would die before morning. It is indeed surprising that he succeeded at all, for in addition to the ordinary difficulties referred to, he met with one that seemed almost insurmountable. Having begun on the 7th day of November, he struck a wave of political excitement that was engrossing the attention of every man, woman and child. The intense suspense that followed the election, when everything was in doubt, and both parties were wild with expectancy, was such a barrier to re-

ligious interests that people very naturally joined in the cry that nothing could be done.

Drunken revelings disgraced the streets, and partisan bellowings rent the air. But the evangelist believed in God, and blowing the gospel trumpet against the wind, he soon saw results. Before the close of the first week quite a number had been converted, and among them one that had been rescued almost from the pit. Bro. Green was a worthy co-laborer. An indefatigable worker, a vehement exhorter, and a man of God, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, he rendered invaluable service. His excellent wife, full of the same spirit, and working with the same faith, deserves equal mention with him. Both over seventy years of age, they seem to have been so much with the Savior, that they work and pray with the ardor of youth.

When "Uncle Ben," as he is sometimes familiarly called, gets a special baptism of the Holy Spirit, he calls it a "Benjamin's mess," and judging from the frequency with which that happens, he must live sumptuously. As the meeting at Corning progressed, marked evidences of the Divine presence increased, and conversions multiplied. One sad feature has hitherto been a marked accompaniment of all Bro. Bitler's meetings, and though we are not able to prove any

providential connection between them, the fact remains that wherever his meetings are held there have been cases of sudden death that have had the effect of arresting attention and emphasizing conviction among the ungodly. It was the case at Third street, Columbus; at Main street, Chillicothe; at Gallipolis; and at Circleville. At Corning, a miner was crushed to death in the mines; a young man was accidentally shot through the heart, by a gun in the hands of a friend; a child was run over by a passing train. All this within ten days, and during the revival. We leave the reader to explain these unwelcome coincidences, and merely record them as matters of fact.

Individual cases of conviction attended this meeting that illustrate the power of the Spirit on the hearts of the unregenerate. One man, a Rail Road engineer, became very much troubled. He dreamed that he was dead, and would wake up at night with a start, as though some terrible impression was preying on his mind. At one of the meetings Bro. Bitler took occasion to refer to the manner in which the Holy Spirit strives with men to get them saved, and this engineer was so vividly portrayed that he went home and accused his wife of telling the preacher all about him.

One case of marvelous rescue that deserves a

place here was that of a Mr. L. M. A——. He was an Attorney, a man of fine education, and one of the most able and successful lawyers in Perry county. But he had become very dissipated and was fast hastening his end. For months past he had been drinking from twenty to thirty glasses of whisky each day, and indeed it had become so much of a necessity with him, that he was obliged to get pretty full to be himself and do his work. One evening at the close of the service, as Bro's. Green and Bitler were on the way home, they met Mr. A. He was drunk then, but talked rationally and seemed to realize the embarrassment of the situation. He told Bro. Bitler that he was not in a condition to converse with him, but he would be glad to see him at his home in the morning, if he was alive and not in hell! Anticipating a horrible experience, too disgusting to be described, he warned the evangelist not to come before nine o'clock in the morning. Promptly at that hour Bro. Bitler called at his residence, and found him alone—his wife being away from home at the time. The wretched night he had passed had left him almost dead, and his sufferings were not yet ended. He said, "Elder, I thought I was going to die awhile ago. I thought you had forgotten me, and I would not get to see you. I have sinned in the

face of light. My father was a minister. Is there any salvation for me?" He seemed very much afraid that there was no hope, and that the Lord would not hear him, but Bro. Bitler encouraged him to look to Christ and hope for salvation. There was no fire in the room and the day was bitter cold, but in spite of Bro. Bitler's caution, he insisted that if the evangelist thought there was any hope for him he would get out of bed and pray. It was of no use to urge him to pray in bed, for he said if he died he would die on his knees, so he crawled out in his night-dress and went at it. Both plead with God, and as Bro. Bitler encouraged him, hope began to spring up and he said, "Elder, I believe the Lord is going to have mercy on me." "Yes," replied Bitler, "*I know He is.*"

Both continued to pray until Mr. A. said, "Elder, I believe the Lord has had mercy on me." Bitler replied again, "I know he has." And there in that attitude of helpless penitence the light broke in and he went back to bed, saying that he was ready, and if he died now he would die a sober man. The vow was made never again to taste a drop of liquor, and so desperate was his determination, that he said he would refuse it if it was a necessity in order to save his life. Accordingly he requested Bro.

Bitler to so inform the Doctor, which he promptly did, with the admonition that it would be better for the patient to die than recover by the aid of whiskey. The physician, who was a Christian, said he would undertake his case, and he thought he could get him through. In view of the desperate depth to which this poor inebriate had gone, it was a matter of general opinion that in his case whiskey was a necessity to his living; but with all that, in less than an hour after his conversion he got up, dressed himself, drank a cup of coffee, and Bro. Bitler, who had just been telling of his conversion, was surprised to see him walk into the church, in company with a friend. Though so weak that he was obliged to hold on to the seat before him while standing up, he told the people what God had done for him, and the story took such a hold on the mind of the friend that he had brought with him, that very soon he too was down on his knees seeking for salvation. The next day was a day of physical suffering as usual, but not attended with the same alarming symptoms, and within a week he was apparently as sound as ever. Both himself and the evangelist believe that in his case the Holy Spirit wrought a special work of deliverance and actually removed the desire for intoxicating liquors. His faith was very soon after put to the test, for in

about two weeks after his conversion, Mr. A——. was employed in a case where he was obliged to go into a saloon and make an inventory of all the liquors it contained. He looked at them, measured them, but neither tasted nor felt any desire for them whatever. Such are the wonders of grace! In the course of several months that followed, he was thrown into associations that ordinarily were irresistible temptations, but a firm reliance on God kept him faithful. At our "Jubilee" held at Circleville, he was present by invitation, and his address is referred to in the account of that meeting.

The meeting at Corning, in view therefore of all these manifestations of the Divine presence, after so many hindrances were overcome, and in the face of so much political diversion, was simply marvelous, and it deserves to rank proportionately with other great revivals that have since followed. Bro. Bitler remained three weeks, and *one hundred and twenty-seven* were converted and united with the church. The work was hard, the remuneration slight, and the evangelist left for Gallipolis after contracting a cold that almost ruined his voice; but was not the vindication of his choice thus far most emphatic and decided?

CHAPTER VIII.

GALLIPOLIS.

ITS LOCATION—COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGES—MORAL STATUS, AND METHODISM.

Gallipolis is a city of about 7,000 inhabitants, situated on the Ohio river midway between Pittsburgh and Cincinnati, and just below the mouth of the Kanawha River. Its advantages in a commercial way are peculiar. With a river trade that contributes largely to its interests and no competing city of equal size and equal commercial advantages nearer than Parkersburgh above, and Ironton below, it is also the base of supplies for the great Kanawha valley which drains a vast section of West Virginia, including Charleston the capitol of the State, and the mountain regions beyond. Apparently cut off from access to the Ohio trade by the hills on the north it is one of the termini of the C. H. V. & T. R. R. which affords an inland outlet to the rest of the world, and commands the trade of towns, villages and country, in all that section of the State. When the great floods of 1883-84 spread dev-

astation and ruin through all the Ohio Valley, and other cities were submerged, Gallipolis stood safe and dry above the highest water mark. While built on a beautiful plane at the base of the hills it was really the Ararat of the times, and the centre of supplies to the suffering multitudes of the towns above and below, and while industriously distributing relief, the Board of Trade could invite the attention of manufacturers to one dry spot and solicit investments of capital where floods are seen but scarcely felt.

The wholesale feature of its trade is vastly more than the size of its population would seem to indicate, and its diversity of advantages has made it a sort of commercial Mecca.

RELIGIOUSLY.

Religiously, Gallipolis was about as high and dry above the floods of salvation.

Subject of course to the ordinary quickenings that often visited the churches, but not remarkable as a religious Mecca. On the contrary the prevalent standard of morals was very low. There is a tendency to underrate and disparage the moral condition of things among the people where we happen to live.

The writer is a methodist preacher, and moves regularly with the turn of the itinerant wheel,

and he has found in each instance that current opinion makes every town the worst town in the state. We have no sympathy with that sort of pessimism that makes *ours* the worst city, the most indifferent community, and the most difficult church in the world to revive. Every city is a Sodom, if the righteous are counted out, and human nature is alike the world over. The Holy Spirit is competent to rain down baptisms of fire in one place as another. Gallipolis was a wicked city. It had its quota of saloons and as many houses of ill-fame. While resident there we assured ourselves of this truth, and with abundant proofs ready for our defense, we published this fact in the Gallipolis Bulletin. The statement was never challenged, and if the reader lives in a county seat, and feels surprised at the proportion, let him look at home, and count the apartments of Jezebel near at hand. The single feature of *gambling* that has always characterized the great steamboat lines was largely prevalent at Gallipolis, and it was to some extent a peculiar seat of this vice. The following "straw" copied from the *Ironton Irontonian* by the *Gallipolis Bulletin*, and inserted without note or comment, serves to indicate a state of things commonly confessed to be the truth:

"Gallipolis has borne the reputation for many

years of being the wickedest town on the Ohio River. It has educated many gamblers and confidence men, and the Courts of Lawrence Co., have transacted considerable business with the graduates of its slums. "Hell's Half Acre" situated near it, has been but a patching to it in comparison."

This "reputation" it seems was not confined to the Ohio River, for in 1864 it had been noised abroad as far as Northern Alabama, and was staple in some quarters of the "Army of the Tennessee." They had gone into camp at Larkinsville, near Huntsville, Ala.; and while the Second Division, and other troops of the 15th Army Corps were encamped there, drinking and gambling was very prevalent. Col. J. L. Vance, now editing the *Gallipolis Bulletin*, was invited among others, to visit the quarters of Gen. Giles A. Smith. Here were present quite a number of general and field officers, and among the number Gen. Morgan L. Smith. After indulging in what the fraternity might call "modest little games" such as Whist, Cabbage, &c., Gen. Morgan L. proposed a little game of poker. (It is said that nobody ever proposes a *big* game of poker.) To this invitation the party all acceded except the Col., who excused himself, telling them to go ahead.

Gen. Morgan L. looked around at the Col., as if in utter astonishment.

"What!" said he, "aint you from Gallipolis?"
"Yes."

"I don't believe it. I've seen a great many men from Gallipolis, and I never knew one that couldn't and wouldn't play poker; and I don't believe it. You never came from Gallipolis."

Thus "from Dan to Beersheba," common repute made the city famous.

Later developments turned up, when, during the revival, men were converted who confessed their connection with it, and astonished the good people with revelations of its powerful prevalence. Without implicating others by name we were given to understand that gambling was chief among the ruling vices that cursed the city, and that it was practiced on a large scale.

Further comment on the truth of the above is seen in the fact that at the close of the revival a number of suits have been instituted to recover lost stakes in various sums. "Squealing" became prevalent, and the gambler's code of honor failed to stay the reactionary tide that spread consternation among the gentlemen of that fraternity.

The Gallipolis *Journal* of February 3rd., says: "The trials before the Justice have been interesting from the fact that a number of prominent business men have been on the stand. The poker

rooms are quiet as charnel houses." The article referred to concludes by saying, "Another player in this game testified in court that he couldn't swear that he had not lost \$10,000 in this game." The fact that "there is now only one poker room in the town, and this is a small game with a two dollar limit," contrasts marvelously with the mass of this particular vice of gambling which was brought to light and finally buried by the great revival. And again we say to astonished readers look at home for an antidote to your surprise.

The Indians walked over mines of gold in their native wilds totally ignorant of its existence, and civilized innocents are constantly treading the thoroughfares of social life in blissful ignorance of underlying dross made up of vast conglomerate masses of vice.

It is seldom that a city gets a reputation for vice and sin that is not deserved. The only lack of justice is in the fact that other cities equally corrupt are not as prominently named in the same category. For where one vice is hidden or suppressed others take precedence, and universal depravity reeks in other forms and under other names. "The whole world lieth in wickedness." I John, 5:19.

Gallipolis enjoyed (?) the just reputation of its depravity. Some poor fellow got aboard a steam-

boat at some point on the river, and too drunk to care what became of him, he refused to give the Clerk his destination. In response to the question, "where are you going?" he replied, "I'm going to hell." "Well," replied the Clerk, "we don't run there, but the nearest place at which we land is Gallipolis."

This was accepted as perfectly satisfactory and on that mutual ground of agreement he got off at Gallipolis.

THE OTHER SIDE.

It has been said that where the devil has a Babylon the Lord has a Jerusalem. This was true of that city and section of country. Methodism had not been asleep. Other churches were there and their influence was not lost. A picture of the better side would take in the educational features of that city, which, with an Academy whose influence has been like a fountain wafting its spray through all the regions round about; a public school system as complete, effective and brilliant, as any in the state. Forty-five Methodist church edifices in the county; and the one at Gallipolis itself, comparing favorably with the best edifice in the bounds of the Ohio Conference, outside the city of Columbus. With a membership of four or five hundred, and the church out

of debt, it occupied a place of influence that contrasted marvelously with the early days of its heroic struggle. But up through fiery trials and cruel opposition it had come, facing a tide of old French infidelity until it had almost died out, and ecclesiastical prejudices that its conquering tread had compelled to recognize and respect it. The history and past triumphs of Methodism on that ground were simply marvelous. The author served that church for three years, and wrote its history up to the date of a day of jubilee, that celebrated the payment of the last dollar of its indebtedness, and he knows something of the toils and tears and triumphs, that preceded the great revival of 1885, and prepared the way for its immortal victories. The world will look at the wicked city and then at the revival, but the candid historian will not forget the long line of regulars that started with a feeble band away back in 1817, and marched the banners of Methodism up to the battle of 1885. True there were worldly minds in the church. There were indifferent hearts that sat Sabbath after Sabbath beneath that pulpit and were not stirred by sainted names that graced each memorial window. There was much to discourage any faithful pastor. There were many things to militate against a great revival, but with all that, let it never be for-

gotten that the old guard of praying saints that had stood by successive pastors, were there. A Tuesday night meeting for the promotion of holiness kept vestal fires burning, and the long, long cry of hungry hearts had gone up as a memorial before God. It is not essential to the glory of God that we ignore his children, and cover up their just relation to his work by raising a cloud out of the wickedness of a city or the worldliness of some men in the church.

The true leaven of Methodism permeated the meal, and the writer, perhaps more familiar with all its local phases than anybody else, well remembers the earnest pleas that long ascended to God for such a revival as we are now pleased to record. Gallipolis methodists have reminded us that in the midst of that period, when the last of financial indebtedness was canceled and the outlook was clear, we "ventured the prophecy that the day was not far distant when some evangelist would be sent of God to sound the trumpet that would call the multitude, and secure the conversion of hundreds on that hallowed ground." It was but a prayer, and yet an utterance of prophetic faith that took its bearings from the prevailing spirit of expectancy and the white waving fields of preparation. Since the days of Father Battelle's pastorate, a Tuesday night holiness

meeting had continued to fan these vestal fires. It was not a "strange fire" either, but the very same that kindled the torch of Methodism in the days of its dawn at Gallipolis, and flamed afresh when the saintly Bishop Hamline preached the unsearchable riches of grace on that same ground.

Were it not that local features are uninteresting to the outside world, we could name other aspects that worked for or against the success of this great revival, but let it suffice that revivals of various interest had graced the Methodism of Gallipolis almost yearly in its past history. The winter of 1884, under the pastorate of the present incumbent, Rev. W. H. Lewis, was not without fruit; but the terrible flood that devastated the Ohio Valley in the February of that year, swept away the increasing interest of many revivals along its course, and that of Gallipolis among the rest.





CHAPTER IX.

The Gallipolis Revival.

HOLIDAY DIVERSIONS—APPLIANCES. USED—A
“WATCH NIGHT MEETING”—YOUNG PEOPLE’S
MEETING—GOING “UP STAIRS”—PAYING THE
BILLS.

The time for beginning a revival series, has by many ministers and churches, come to be fixed with the beginning of the “Week of Prayer.” This ordinarily dates from the first or second Sabbath of the New Year, and escapes the diverting festivities of the holidays.

The Gallipolis meeting was begun by the pastor. The initial work of the revival was done long before it was recognized by the public. It began immediately after Conference in pastoral visiting from house to house, in which the individual members of the church were pledged to pray for a revival; many entered into this covenant with the Pastor. This led to increased attendance at the prayer meetings, and at once the spiritual tide began to rise. The burden of

all prayers seemed to be, "O Lord revive thy work." Prayer meetings increased to three a week, at which several persons were converted. On the first Sabbath in December special revival services began. There were two conversions the first week. The Evangelist came during the second week.

The visible prospect of success was beset with innumerable difficulties. Great preparations were being made in social and business circles for a revival of another sort, and the announcements for the season filled the programme with parties, balls, and various attractions that made a revival of religion seem an unwelcome intrusion.

Ordinary policy might have deferred the issue, but the battle begun, it went right on with increasing interest from the beginning. The second night after the arrival of the Evangelist, there were two conversions, and from that time on, with a single exception, there were conversions every night of the nine weeks. At first the numbers were few, and confined chiefly to the younger people. At the end of the month there were about seventy-five, chiefly young people, converted.

The local press was freely used at the beginning of the meetings.

Notices of the revival services were posted in conspicuous places. A large banner with a printed invitation to attend, was unfurled near the public square. The city was literally sown with religious tracts and gospel invitations, and the walls of the church were adorned with banners covered with Scripture quotations. These appliances are fully explained in the chapter devoted to Methods, and need only a brief reference in this place. Aside from these, nothing unusual or sensational was practiced to attract the crowds. The first half hour of every service was devoted to singing. Everybody sang. Many of the songs were new and full of melody, and this feature of the meeting was one of the most attractive and inspiring of any that characterized that great revival. Many were attracted to the house by a volume of song that rolled out like the sound of a Niagara, and could be distinctly heard for two squares from the building. In spite of amusements and diversions of every sort, the meeting grew steadily in power, and all the elements of preparation, until the closing night of the Old Year. Always ready to seize an opportunity, the Evangelist saw one in the advent of a New Year.

A Watch Night Meeting was announced, in the hope that it would culminate in a favorable crisis,

and give the revival a new impetus: and so it proved. Conversions had characterized almost every service, but nothing remarkable had transpired. The "Watch Night" meeting proved to be a Pentecost. It was a time of great power, and those present continue to speak of it as a marvelous meeting.

Just as the bell struck the closing hour of the Old Year, and heralded the coming of the New, two souls were clearly and powerfully converted to God. A few who had doubted the propriety of reviving an old fashioned Methodist custom of sitting up all night, and yet could not resist the novelty of being present, were soundly converted to the idea before morning, and it is likely that their impressions will find them awake on the morning of January 1, 1886. The novelty of a midnight meeting, preceded as this was with some noise of the revival, attracted a few straggling sinners that had spent the previous hours of the night in revelry; and such was the power of the meeting that they went away under conviction, and were subsequently converted.

On the first Saturday night of the New Year a *Young People's Meeting* was held, at which the first great "break" occurred, and *twenty four* young persons were converted. It may be worthy of notice, that Bro. Bitler never succeeds

in reaching the climax of a revival, or rather that elevated plane of remarkable results that so often characterises his meetings, until he succeeds in capturing the young people. After the way is prepared in general, and the propitious elements begin to be seen and felt, this is his first strategic point. It is usually carried when the older church people are absent, and Saturday night is selected as a time most auspicious. Then the forces are scattered, the older people are less likely to attend, and a whole evening can be devoted exclusively to the young people.

During the next ten days, and including the results of this young people's meeting, there were two hundred and fifty persons converted. They were chiefly older persons, from all classes of society. This is a most marvelous record, and will find few parallels in the history of evangelistic results in modern times.

With the new year, the regular night service was transferred to the large audience room up stairs. The usual objections were urged against the change, both on the score of its militating against the interests of the meeting, and a reluctance on the part of the Board to throw open the upper room to the "backseat fraternity," who leave evidences of their defilement where they happen to be seated for any length of time.

Moreover it was said that the lower room—which, by the way, is so arranged that its seating capacity is nearly equal to the upper room, except the gallery—was not yet crowded, and that until then there was no occasion for the transfer. We refer to this for the reason that doubtless many evangelistic pastors have found the same difficulty when attempting larger things. Ordinarily, a lecture room is the scene of all the revivals in a given church, and the devoted people of the church become so accustomed to its sacred surroundings and homelike presence, that they lose their valor, and let their zeal be dissipated, when with the coming of the Sabbath and its larger attendance, the services are held in the audience room. Besides, there are in all our Boards and churches, those who look upon this room as forbidden to the tramping masses. The carpets are too costly, and the furniture too fine, for the commonplace use of what they regard as the lower classes. Revivals of religion are coarse and vulgar, as compared with the ordinary, and almost ritualistic dress parade of a fashionable Sunday service; and the vandalism of marching the masses into this “dim religious light” of the main audience room, is simply shocking. The cost of lighting and heating is much greater, and the expense of wear and tear, refitting and fur-

nishing, is too intolerable for their unbelief in the grand results that may follow. We aver that when our Methodist churches are too fine for the admission of the masses, and the practical work of saving men by revival methods, we might as well withdraw from the evangeistic field altogether, and make way for a Salvation Army that can march into theaters and saloons and capture men in their every day clothes.

At Gallipolis, they are fond of referring to some of the arguments used against occupying the upper room, at the expense of one good brother, who will forgive the allusion, if we modify the story by saying that we have not had opportunity to hear his version of it. It is said that he very earnestly opposed the change, and when the multitude thronged the place he insisted that it was unsafe. Having remained away from the meetings for a few days, he ventured to return, but instead of going into the upper room where the congregation was assembled, he went into the lecture-room below, and spent a greater part of the evening. Doubtless as he sat beneath that vast audience, he was musing on the probabilities of a terrible catastrophe, and willing to become a martyr to his faith.

In the matter of occupying the larger room a principle is involved. It looks like an announce-

ment of proportionate attendance and results. It is an exhibition of faith that is measured by the enlarged seating capacity. In brief, it looks like business. It is business. It takes some heroism to attempt it, and commits the pastor and the church to a siege of life or death, sink or swim, survive or perish, and they *must have a revival*. It is seldom that a great revival comes to the man that feels his way along from meeting to meeting, and method to method, and only advances as his confidence increases. In the work of God we must plunge into the sea, and trust the Holy Ghost to help us to the shore. Here is the faith,

“Which laughs at impossibilities,
And cries it shall be done.”

The wear and tear is considerable, and the expense is proportionate, but so is the wear and tear on the preacher and the people, and the cost of a great revival could only be justified by the salvation of souls. Great efforts have their compensations however. At Gallipolis the collections defrayed the incidental expenses; the evangelist, who had trusted the voluntary support of the people, was remunerated; a new library was founded, and six hundred dollars contributed for this purpose; and about eight hundred dollars was raised for repairing and refitting the church.

The same readiness was manifested at Circle-ville. One Sabbath morning, several weeks after the revival, the pastor began the service at half past ten, the usual hour; baptized a number of children, using the disciplinary form of ritual, preached a sermon on the subject, called for contributions to make repairs and purchase new furniture and a carpet, and before twelve o'clock the amount subscribed was a little more than one thousand dollars. Any genuine revival, if judiciously managed, will pay its way, meeting current expenses as they accrue, and making the church look like a new convert—regenerated.



CHAPTER X.

Gallipolis Revival, Continued.

THE "HIGH WATER MARK"—SPECIAL MEETINGS.
PRESS COMMENT—DRUNK—A CONVERTED CATHOLIC—
OBDURACY CONQUERED.

The work in the main audience room began at once to assume large proportions. Gallery, aisles, and every available space was crowded, and it soon became necessary to open the lower room, and run two meetings at the same time. Even then, at times, many were turned away for want of room. By this time the great point of attraction did not centre in the mottoes, and other appliances used to arrest attention; nor yet in the Evangelist; nor wholly in his preaching. The preaching was not of the sensational kind, but was direct, pointed and practical—the old-fashioned Methodist kind—gospel preaching. Hearers were urged to a definite committal, an unconditional surrender to God, and sinners were taught to look for a present salvation by faith. The great attraction had come to be *salvation it-*

self. The number of conversions at the altar, or near it, during ten successive nights, averaging twenty-five souls a night, gave the meeting such prominence that every-thing fell before it, or rose with the tide. At one meeting the number reached *thirty-five*, and the evangelist, contrary to his wonted custom, violated good taste(?) and ran the risk of unfriendly criticism. He was not guilty of standing on his head, nor of any other outlandish proceeding; but he did stand on the *pulpit*, long enough to make an extraordinary announcement; and, in ordinary times, long enough to wreck the reputation of any preacher in the world. But it will be seen that the extraordinary circumstances of the time fully warranted the proceeding. From the beginning, the meeting increased in power, until conversions began to exceed former meetings. They were announced near the close more rapidly than the doxology could be sung. The standing multitude covered the platform and surrounded the pulpit. The evangelist conducted the battle standing on a chair. As the numbers ran up to 30-31-32-33 34-35!!—having neither wings, nor a chariot with which to rise, he wanted a higher peak, and stepped up on the pulpit beside the Bible, with this declaration, “I just want to say that this is an extraordinary occasion, and I’m responding

to an extraordinary impulse. It is only once in a lifetime that a man can afford to stand here, but I desire to have it known as the *high water mark* of this meeting, when the preacher stood on the pulpit." At various points on the Ohio River are marks of the highest rise of the great flood of 1884. Some of these water marks are cut in stone and revered as memorials of disaster; but here was a flood of salvation, worthy to compare with the swelling currents of that great river, and if the evangelist had not caught the idea of utilizing the parallel, it would have been a noted omission very uncommon with him. Lest the reader, from his dim and distant view of the whole scene, incline to criticise the proceeding, we must remind him that in not one instance have we heard it mentioned with disapproval by those who were present. Such was the intense interest of the occasion, and the naturalness of the step, that several persons of excellent taste and good sense have assured the writer that it was a *climax*, only to be approved and appreciated by those who witnessed the heavenly pentecost that seemed to rest on all the people. Perhaps others have stood on the same "sacred desk" to hang up a horse-shoe as an appropriate symbol for a wedding, but never before did the preacher mount the cushion to chronicle the high water mark of a great revival.

The marked and special features of that meeting, would make a chapter of thrilling interest. The scenes attendant on the conversion of thirty-five souls, of every shade of previous life and experience, together with such manifestations of joy and triumph as will characterize a great church when formalism melts down, and stiffness lets go, can hardly be described, and we forbear the attempt.

In addition to the frequent use of both rooms for public service, special meetings were held at various hours ; for children, for young men, for seekers, for women, and for men only. Some of the greatest victories of the revival were secured at these special meetings. In the meetings for men only, an opportunity was afforded for direct and personal appeal, that was not only employed by the preacher in public address, but by a hand to hand method of personal persuasion in which christian men engaged in every part of the house.

During the period of the greatest interest in the general meeting, and on to its close, it was found necessary to exclude all children under twelve years of age from the night meetings. Since they were abundantly provided for during the day, it was not a total neglect of the children, and they were prevented from occupying seats that were needed to accommodate older persons.

With all that could be done, a multitude were continually blocking the aisles, lining the walls, and thronging the doorway to the pavement, patiently standing by the hour, to witness the work of salvation at the altar and in the congregation. During this intensely interesting period the work was not confined to the altar, but conversions occurred all over the house.

Meetings were held daily at 2:30, 6 and 7 p. m. The evangelist preached almost every night, and on the Sabbath; led much of the singing; visited among the people, and labored incessantly; while the pastor, and during a large part of the time, the Presiding Elder, were abundant in labors and untiring in efforts to save the people. To a looker on, it seemed that everybody was at work, and that sort of apology which disapproves of personal work in the congregation, seemed to have but a slim following.

Chief among these laborers was the pastor himself, heading the forces and gleaning in every quarter of the congregation. Not only in the church, but everywhere—on the streets, in shop, and store, and office, the people were at work, and salvation was the theme. Every temporal interest became subordinate.

The whole city, not only felt the influence of the revival, but was intensely effected by it in

every department. No opposition seemed to be manifest to any degree. Hardened sinners were amazed and trembled as before the Lord. Many who ordinarily oppose revival efforts were either silenced by the popular current of approval, or won to the side of praise and congratulation by the conversion of their friends. The most hostile foes of the church were either disarmed by the spirit of the meeting, or left so completely alone, that their very presence was not noticed.

An article which appeared in the *Gallipolis Journal* of January 21, 1885, so fairly represents the work at that stage that we insert it, in part.

A MARVELOUS REVIVAL.

THE TOWN TORN ASUNDER BY THE MOST REMARKABLE RELIGIOUS WORK IN THE HISTORY OF OHIO.

The great revival at the Methodist Episcopal Church in this city, has assumed the proportions of a sensation. The very by-ways of the city are fragrant with the incense of a new-born life. * * *

THE UPHEAVAL.

Mr. Bitler's manner in the pulpit is impassioned to a high degree. His presence puts spirit into a congregation and his audience throbs with his every mo-

tion, and become lost if he but disappears for a moment. He is gifted with remarkable executive ability. So earnest is he that his work is reflected in his face, at which one never tires of looking. Through it all there is a strain of wit so charming as to blend the large crowd into one happy whole. Nothing disconcerts him. He is irrepressible and untiring. * * * * *

The M. E. Church is the largest and costliest church edifice in this city, and probably as large as any in Southeastern Ohio.

Meetings began in the basement, but the increased interest compelled the use of the up-stairs. This room, too, was soon found to be not adequate and overflow meetings were held below, and frequently both rooms were full and people were standing.

The work of conversion progressed in every seat of the large edifice. Throughout the whole, the plan of work has included the simple means of invitation to the altar. No special aim was made to "pulverize the rum power," or break the spell of the gambling hell, so in consequence no special animosity was met in the fight. The first converts were ladies and young people, then followed others from the ranks of that large class of young men just entered on a business career. Soon the conquests took a more astonishing turn and here finds its marvelous character. The next grade of converts were men of *fixed habits*. Men who had turned the cold shoulder to the church portals for years, entered and melted as snow before fire. From every quarter of the city; from every class of business; men of every nativity; rich and

poor alike ; the drunkard and the incipient gambler, came and bowed their lowly heads, seeking for a better life than they had had. The spirit ran as wild-fire through entire families. The cherub of ten, and the hoary frosts of seventy-five were given to God.

It is in the air ; in the faces of the people you meet ; it whirls up the by-ways, like the driven snow, and finds lodgment everywhere.

Day and night the work has gone on. Through snow and sleet and rain and cold, the people have flocked to church and been reluctantly driven at night from the portals. Every convert has been a worker and brought lambs to the fold. The experience of those converted as related in general meeting, have made strong men shed tears.

Within six weeks, up to and not including Monday last, 410 persons were converted, and 257 names were added to the church rolls. During that time the Presbyterian Church has added fifteen members, the most of them undoubtedly receiving grace at the M. E. Church.

The "incipient gambler" was doubtless among the seekers, but so was the gambler of maturer experience ; and as to the drunkard, he was there, drunk. Three cases we could name came to the altar in an intoxicated condition. One of them we witnessed while visiting the revival. He seemed almost too helpless to kneel, and we doubted the outcome. Hope and sympathy was given the right of way however, and he was en-

couraged to pray. At a later meeting he came to the altar sober, and was soundly converted. More than four months later while visiting at Gallipolis we made special inquiry as to the outcome, of which we had before doubted, and it was a joy to discover that the transformation was complete, and he was numbered among the most reliable converts of the meeting. Of fine personal appearance, and worthy to rank among men of ability, he seemed to deserve the confidence and esteem of those who had labored so earnestly to secure his salvation.

Another, whose case equally illustrates the power of grace, is reported still faithful. He was a printer by trade. Entered the army in 1861, and came out of the service a drunkard. Descending at every turn he became a "tramp." Was kicked out of one office after another, and became so utterly abandoned, that his friends gave up all hopes of his rescue. Divorced from his wife, and supremely devoted to drink, he sacrificed everything, and was willing to risk anything, for his abominable god. Once he swam the Ohio river for a drink, and at another time he undertook to walk across the railroad suspension bridge at Point Pleasant for the same price. The bridge hangs high enough above the river to admit the passage of steamers, and at the time

the attempt was made the ties were covered with about eight inches of snow. In the absence of the watchman, whom he had induced to be absent on some deceptive pretense, he undertook the perilous trip, and when near the opposite side, missed his footing, and fell about thirty feet into a drift of snow. His experience, as it approached the end of this folly, was of the same sort. On the 7th of January he sold his overcoat for two dollars, and spent the money for drink. On the 8th he traded his clothes for a poorer suit and fifty cents. On the 10th he traded his shoes for an older pair and fifty cents, and of course the "boot" went for drink. Passing the church on that day, he was attracted by the singing, and just as a multitude of others had done, he paused to hear it, and ventured at last inside the church. He was not a promising candidate for church membership and when he gave his name to the pastor it was written in the back of the book. But coffee and kindness, with all that usually accompanies both, was administered by a brother who believes in the salvation of a drunkard; and the next day he went to the meeting sober, and was converted.

We once heard an eminent evangelist say, that 'God could save any sinner out of hell,' and in the light of the many illustrations which might

be given, from the actual results of this great revival, and others we have recently witnessed, the truth of the statement is strongly reinforced.

When it is said that all classes were reached by this revival, it is meant to be understood as literally true. Every conquest gave new zest to the meeting, and sustained public interest at the highest pitch. Not only were the high brought down and the lowly exalted, but such as were separated from the church by social and ecclesiastical barriers, were attracted to the meetings and converted to God.

A young man who was a Catholic, of at least a third generation of Catholics, and knew absolutely nothing of Protestant worship, while passing the church was attracted by the singing. He asked the boys about the door what was going on. When told that it was a Methodist revival, he added his ignorant prejudices to this information, and said he would go in and "see the Methodists hop." The singing was divine, the methods were strange, but his heart was all broken up, and he scarcely knew why. The next day while canvassing for some article that he was selling, he chanced to call at the residence of a brother M——, and very soon began to inquire about the revival. It was all a mystery to him. The family gave him all the information they

could, and a son of brother M——, took an especial interest in him and encouraged him in every possible way. In a day or two the young man secured a bible, and spent the most of that night reading it, and trying to “pray as the Methodists do.” He went to bed with a heavy heart, but could not sleep. Toward morning, however, he went to sleep, and when he awoke everything was bright. His heart was light, and he was very happy. Instead of darkness and gloom the mystery was solved, and all was “brilliant as an electric light.” He went to the church and told his experience, and the unaffected simplicity of his story gave weight to his testimony, and won the sympathy of all that heard it. His business makes him a wanderer, but his letters continue to assure his Methodist friends that the Savior is with him.

The following case is given as an illustration of the power of grace, the mercy and providence of God, in spite of obdurate rebellion. J—C. was regarded in early life as a youth of good morals, and took some pride in the reputation it gave him; but subsequent life developed a very different course. At the age of sixteen he had not tasted liquor. One winter, during a revival at some place in Virginia, four young men with whom he associated, came to him and urged him

to go with them and join the church. This "moral young man" persuaded them that they could be christians out of the church as well as in it, and the whole party went to the theatre instead. The four led dissipated and vicious lives. One was killed by a mob in the Black Hills. One fills a felon's grave in Missouri. One was Ellis, of "Ashland murder" fame. The fourth is serving a life sentence in the Tennessee penitentiary.

J— C. married a christian woman, who plead with him daily to "come to Jesus," but to no effect. The loss of a little child stirred him, but he became rebellious. The sickness and death of his wife was attended with powerful incentives to repentance, but proved unavailing. Rallying for a moment when dying, his wife gave him a final invitation and said, "will you come to Jesus now?" with her last breath. He became a wanderer, but wherever he went, above the din of machinery, the noise of the train, or the roar of the wind, "come to Jesus" rang in his ears.

In the wilds of Texas, among the "cow boys," he was taken sick. Gradually sinking, he became so ill that his companions supposed him to be dead, and selected a place to bury him. During all this time the admonition was constantly in his mind, but though great'y alarmed he refused

to pray, and when he began to rally so that he could speak, he uttered a terrible oath. After that his convictions wore away, and he spent four years in vice and dissipation. He went to the revival with no other motive than to ridicule the young converts, and when approached by them, responded with an oath. When an invitation was given to seekers to repair to the lower room, he went down with a friend to see what was done, and took a seat near the altar with no thought of repentance. Bro. Bitler soon found him, and after ignoring his defenses, began to ply the truth. Finally he said to him, "will you come to Jesus now?" This was the same arrow that had pierced his heart before. The struggle was desperate, but he soon replied, "*I will*," and kneeling at the altar, he cried for mercy and was saved.

He has since been faithful, and feels that God has a mission for him. If to his natural abilities, which are considerable, is added a course of mental training, he may yet be instrumental in doing great good.



CHAPTER XI.

Gallipolis Revival, Continued.

SIX HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE — A SKEPTIC
SAVED — BACKSLIDER RECLAIMED — “WEAK-
MINDED.” — NON-CHURCH-GOERS—COUNTY OF-
FICIALS.—FIRE!!!

The whole number that professed conversion, from the beginning to the close of the revival at Gallipolis, was *six hundred and twenty-five*. This includes the child of 10 and the old man of 70. It includes all grades and classes in society, the lowest and the highest. Among the number are river men, railroad men, mechanics, merchants, teachers, drummers, physicians, lawyers and county officers. 426 joined the M. E. Church, some joined other churches in the city, others joined in the country. A large number of these converted were already church-members; not only Methodists, but Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Baptists, Lutherans and Catholics.

At the close of a Sunday night service prior to the coming of Brother Bitler, a stranger tarried

after the congregation was dismissed. The pastor found him weeping, and in response to his request Bro. Lewis promised to pray for him. He was a "drummer," and appeared to be deeply convicted. Obligated soon to leave the city he agreed to write and inform the pastor when he was converted. It was but a short time, however, till he was found in an evening meeting with a smiling face that seemed to indicate a change in his experience. When opportunity offered, he came forward and told the congregation that he had been *converted on the train*. He was a man of good address and excellent appearance, and his testimony added materially to the interest of the meeting. He had been a Superintendent of Public Schools, and gave evidence of some culture. A skeptic, he had wasted some time in the study of the New Testament in the original, and endeavored to utilize his knowledge of the Greek in criticising the text, but his conversion had put a new phase on his interpretations, and revealed the power and wisdom of some passages that were stumbling blocks before. Returning to his home in Indiana, he told his wife of the great transformation, and she at once became interested. Formerly a christian, she had backslidden and given up attendance at the church, but this induced her to go again. She was soon

after reclaimed, and wrote Bro, Lewis telling him of it, and how happy they were at home.

Three or four persons were converted before the coming of the evangelist, but a much larger number date their *conviction* to a period before any special meetings were held. Either some special providence, or the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, preceded the influence of the meeting, and prepared the hearts of many for its coming. It is doubtless true of all great revivals, that the Holy Spirit pioneers the way, and does a great work among the people, before any visible signs are discovered. Numerous instances attest the truth of this remark, and both at Gallipolis and Circleville, it was no uncommon thing, to hear the newly converted refer to a time long before the meetings when their convictions began.

Another instance of this is found in the case of John L——. He had been a christian at one time, and for a period of about seven years he was faithful. But little by little the light went out, and ever since the war he had been in a backslidden state. For five years he had not attended the church, but while receiving the "Templar" degree in the Ohio Valley Commandery, he determined to join the church. This was six weeks prior to his final surrender at the meetings, and prepared the way for it. He declined going

to the altar for some time, and prayed a good deal at home, and elsewhere, believing that he could be converted there, as well as at the altar. His was not a solitary case in this respect; for many resisted this step during the meetings, but were finally obliged to surrender. Indeed we never knew, either in this revival or any other, a single person, to stand on this refusal and be converted. It involves a principle. Submission must be complete. Fortunately for him, after some time lost on his method, he yielded the point, and coming to the altar, he fell on his knees like a man letting go of a rope. He was a large, muscular man, and his coming down was tremendous. In a few minutes he was saved. A brief sequel to his conversion is worthy of a place in this account, and we give it as an illustration of the power of grace. He was a man of quick temper, and when angry, very profane. He was employed by a large wholesale house in draying, and sometimes resorted to a dray pin to conquer his mules. His cruelty when very angry was proverbial, and though a man of excellent parts, and highly esteemed for many good qualities, he had no mercy on an obstreperous mule. One rainy day, soon after his conversion, he was greatly tried on his weakest point. He was putting up his team, expecting to get ready in time

to go to the evening meeting. The mules suddenly took it into their heads to run away, and off they went to the hills, with John after them. Tired, hungry, and wet, he climbed the hill, occasionally tumbling down on the way. He said the devil wanted him to swear, but he wouldn't. Once he fell down and struck his head against a post, and the devil was sure he would swear, but he didn't. Finally he drove the mules back to the stable, and then as if they had not forgotten the last runaway scrape, when they had been pounded with a hickory broom handle, they scampered away again, and this time took a trip down the river. This was a hard trial, but after some difficulty they were returned to the stable, and as John went in, he saw the hickory broom standing by, and he avers, that the devil and the mules were sure that he would use it, but he disappointed both. Instead of the old programme he gave them a good supper and a better bed than usual, and repaired to the house. When he went in he sat down to supper, and putting his face in his hands began to pray. His wife said, "John, what's the matter with you?" He replied, "I've got a victory over the devil and the mules, that's what's the matter." He became very happy while recounting the triumph. The joy of that victory more than repaid his enforced

absence from the church, and the escapade with the mules proved a means of grace not soon to be forgotten.

When Bro. Bitler went to Gallipolis the *visible* cloud was but the size of a man's hand. Worn and jaded from excessive labors at Corning, he went to work with all the energy he possessed, and in the firmest faith that a great revival was at hand. He did not succeed, in one instance at least, in making a very favorable impression as to his ability. A gentleman whose intelligence and social standing ranked with the best, and who came so near being a "brother" that he was always counted on for his sympathy and support in almost every enterprise of a philanthropic character, and of whose position and influence we forbear to speak lest it seem to be flattery, was in attendance early in the meeting. Having "sampled" the evangelist, he said to his friends that Mr. Bitler would likely succeed in getting some "*weak-minded* and emotional people, but that he would never reach the thinking class."

However, before the meeting had progressed very far, Mr. ———. was himself among the "weak-minded." Soundly converted to God he threw his soul into the meeting, and worked hard and faithfully to the end for the salvation of others.

There were very many persons converted who had not been inside of a church for years. It was no uncommon thing to hear them say that they had not been at any church for five, ten, and even a longer period of years. One had not attended divine service for about twenty-seven years. He was converted the first night he attended the revival. The number of men converted in the various revivals conducted by Bro. Bitler, who have not been inside of any church for years, is hard to estimate; but in every instance, the proportionate count is large, and very conspicuous as a feature of each meeting.

Sometimes their very mistakes of mannerism, and the difficulty with which they seem to adapt themselves to the new order of things, gives novelty to their testimonies, and abundant proof of their former absence. One would hardly think that the simple forms of expression and methods of service, so common among all worshipers, would be a new world to many that daily pass our doors; but such is the case, and while denominational polity ranges our forces into companies and regiments, there is a mass outside that know no difference between Methodist, Presbyterian, etc., except that they are located differently, and go by different names. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you

again;" and, to use their own terms, while we are looking down on them they are looking up at us, as "tony" and "goody" people, that are "gone from" them.

The conversion of such men includes not only regeneration, but a voyage of discovery, and they come to the shores of a continent that was an unknown world before. Their conversion may be regarded as remarkable, but the methods that secure their attendance, must be credited with the largest share in the victory. Even more remarkable is the conversion of men with whom the harvest is nearly past and the summer almost ended. Old men, who have run the gauntlet for many years and weathered the influences of many revivals, are the most improbable subjects of conviction and conversion on earth. Business men are usually too much engrossed to give a revival any attention. County officials are too closely identified with their constituents, and too conspicuously observed, to think of bowing at the feet of the Saviour. And yet the Gallipolis revival numbered among its converts representatives of all these classes.

The *Sheriff* was arrested. Under the great seal of the Holy Spirit he surrendered to a writ that took possession of his heart. The *Prosecuting Attorney* pressed his suit at the bar of the

Highest Tribunal and secured a decision in his favor. It would seem that a man who had loved the church and labored for its advancement for years ; who had served two terms as *Probate Judge* of the county, would long ago have obtained the *witness* of his adoption as an heir of God. It was not till this great revival, however, that Judge C——, was satisfied with this item of his Father's Will, but then and there it was admitted to probate and put beyond question.

FIRE!!!

The Gallipolis fire department was not called out to extinguish the pentecostal flames, but as they began to assume the proportions of a conflagration, the company were among the interested spectators. They were a stalwart set of men, full of heroic blood, and in the prime and strength of young manhood. On the score of promptness and efficiency, the late Chief Bunker, of Cincinnati, awarded them the praise of being the best volunteer fire company in the State.

Their *Chief* was a worthy representative. Physically a good specimen of the typical policeman, he was of a generous and companionable nature, and wielded an uncommon influence among his associates. His experience, afterward recited, proves that he could hold his own with

any of them in dissipation. On the eve of the New Year he spent the closing hours of the year in drinking and gambling. Having drank till 1 a. m., and played thirteen games of "freeze out," he went home and told his wife that he had been at the 'watch night' meeting at the Methodist church. Profanity was among his chief vices, and it had become so much of a habit that he could scarcely drive a nail without swearing. Doubtless his experience in all these things, is so frequently duplicated, that it is in no sense remarkable, but the grace that arrests a man of his habits, and works a thorough transformation, must be regarded as marvellous. Along with others of the fire company he went to the altar and was soundly converted. These were soon transformed into workers, and before long one half of the whole department were won over to the side of Christ.

On one occasion, and while a member of the department was on the floor speaking, an alarm of fire was sounded. They fled at once from the church, but discovering it to have been a "false alarm," they returned and resumed their places as before. During their absence the time was spent in singing, and when they came back the brother who had been interrupted took the floor again, and beginning where he left off, he con-

cluded his remarks as if nothing had happened.

We are not able to give the whole number converted, but the victory was so far complete that the old programme was revolutionized, and a new order of things established. On the last evening of Bro. Bitler's labor at Gallipolis, the "amen corner" was reserved for the firemen. Headed by the chief, they made their way through the crowded aisle and filed into their seats. After they were seated the chief rose up, and addressing the pastor, said, "Bro. Lewis, if you'll allow me, I'd like to make an announcement." Permission given, he proceeded to say: "Down at our hall awhile ago we passed a resolution, the substance of which is, that we would dispense with our annual ball on the 22nd of February, and have a prayer-meeting instead; and we want all you good people to come and pray for us."

The resolution was passed on the 6th of February, and reads as follows—

"Resolved, That instead of our annual ball on the twenty-second of February, we hold a Union Prayer-meeting, and that an invitation be extended to all the churches and the public in general."

The prayer meeting was held on that date, according to announcement. It is estimated that

five hundred persons were present. The time was devoted to prayer, testimony, and brief addresses, and the meeting was said to be one of the most spiritual and profitable of any of the day meetings of the revival series. It began at half-past two, and closed at four o'clock. Bro. Lewis proposed a thank offering for the benefit of the department, and with true methodistic spirit, a collection was taken which amounted to twenty-eight dollars. Later on the firemen reciprocated the favor, and held a festival for the purchase of a carpet for the Methodist church, and the proceeds netted ninety-two dollars. The general reformation which took place in the hearts of these men is further evidenced by the fact, that prior to the revival, it was customary at almost every meeting, to purchase a keg of beer and drink the liquor in their hall, but since then not a word has been said about a keg of beer. During a brief visit at Gallipolis, just four months after the resolution referred to was adopted, we were present when an alarm of fire called out the force. The fire was near a saloon; but the chief called attention to the fact, that such was the good effect of the revival on the whole department, that none of the men were seen to enter the saloon. We congratulate him on the fact, that five members of his own family are

CHAPTER XII.

Gallipolis Revival, Continued.

THE LOCAL PRESS.—JOURNAL, BULLETIN, TRIBUNE,
AND DISTRICT NEWS.—TWENTY SIX HUNDRED
AND FIFTY ONE.—THE DIPPER.—RIVER MEN.—
ALL ABOARD!

With files of the Gallipolis papers before us, we gratefully acknowledge the ample notices and abundant reports which they record. From the beginning to the close of the meetings, they kept up with the growing interest, and devoted many columns to the revival. They were loyal to the interests of the work, and contributed immensely to its success. They kept the people informed, and recited the details of every advance. They attracted the attention of multitudes, who came from the country, and distant points, to witness the marvellous results and carry the tidings home. Other papers throughout the State took up the story, and “noised abroad” the work of God. Friendly editorials, flaming headlines, and abundant space devoted to the revival, gave it a prominence that inspired the workers at

home, and kindled faith and zeal in many revivals remote from Gallipolis. The number of papers throughout the State that made friendly allusion to the meeting, was so great, that after investigating the matter, we abandoned the intention of publishing a list of them. The news was printed from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and in many places doxologies were sung in grateful appreciation. If ever we doubted the wisdom of "noising abroad" the work of God, by publishing revival accounts, this recent illustration of its influence in quickening the struggling forces in other places, would suffice to dispel all misgivings.

The Cincinnati *Commercial Gazette* though furnished with a full and correct account, ignored the revival altogether, provoking another paper of opposite political faith, to say, "Is it possible that that paper has no sympathy for, and takes no stock in great reformations!" We cannot hope always to enlist the secular press, but in this case doubtless, a Gallipolis social scandal, or political fight, would have been fully reported; and it could hardly be said to be of more general interest to the mass of its readers, than a wholesale reformation like that of the great revival. Ordinarily the press recognized the value of the work being done, and the demand

for extra numbers gave proof that it was abundantly appreciated. Articles from the *Gallipolis Journal, Bulletin* and *Tribune*, would include a splendid account of the revival from the beginning to the close, and worthily detail the chief features of the meeting. The spirit and tone of these papers, as well as an index of the true state of the meeting, is seen in the following :

“The revival at the M. E. Church is the most wonderful exhibition of religious feeling and fervor ever seen in this city. Its influence permeates the whole city. It is the topic of conversation everywhere—in the household, in the store, in the shop, and even in the saloons. We trust the good seed thus sown, will bear fruit an hundred fold, and prove the reformation of the city. Religion is the purifier of human character. It destroys the dross in the soul and leaves it a pearl of beauty. The more the world has of it, the better is its condition.”—*Journal, Jan. 14, 1885.*

“The converts and accessions to the church, are not only now counted by scores, but by hundreds, and the tide is still rolling in. Daily and nightly the church, upstairs and down, is a jam, and many cannot be seated. Moody and Sankey’s great meetings in Brooklyn and New York in 1876 did not exceed in interest, in proportion to the population, the meetings here. In February of that year they opened their meetings under the auspices of the Young

Men's Christian Association in the two halls of the great hippodrome, the largest accommodation in that city, and which when filled contained 11,000 people. One thousand persons have been accommodated in the audience room of the church here, and nearly, if not quite as many more in the lecture room and gallery, and while thousands could not obtain entrance to Moody and Sankey's meetings in New York, hundreds could not be accommodated here. No inclemency of weather, no rush of business, no private matters, no nothing keeps away the people, as is often the case in the Summer season.

Is this not wonderful for a city of 7,000 or 8,000 inhabitants? No man, however differing in views from the Methodists, can find it in his heart to condemn it. When hundreds of persons for the first time in their lives offer testimony to a new heart, we must believe there is reality in it. And there can be no sin in inviting people to serve God and forsake evil. Many may fail and fall back after a time; but men fail at everything they undertake. It is only the few who are successful at anything they go at, but generally all are better for having tried, and many recuperate and succeed after many failures. Those who get the real, genuine religion, in our opinion do not fail. It is only those who are deceived by a false excitement, that discover after a time that they have no religion. If religion saves it *saves*. We all know excitement and scare do not change the average condition of a man; but that men can and do reform

until they are not the same is beyond all controversy and question."—*Bulletin*, Jan. 13, 1885.

"The revival at the M. E. Church is the most wonderful meeting ever held in this part of Ohio. It has reached all parts of the city and all classes of people. It started with Sunday School scholars and has reached out until now business men, professional men, county officials, firemen, saloonists, gamblers, drinkers, in short, the whole community is wrought up to a high state of excitement, and we presume more religious talking has been done in Gallipolis in the last six weeks than in six years before. Even church people look on in amazement, while all exclaim "It is the Lord." Every citizen who loves order and decorum in the community should lend all the aid he can to promote the religious awakening."—*Tribune*, Jan. 20, 1885.

These papers were at times literally crowded with revival news—the *Journal* and *Bulletin*, sometimes devoting two columns and a half to the meetings. The *Bulletin* exceeded in *headlines*, of which the following, printed at the head of an article of two and a third columns in the issue of Feb. 3rd, is given as a sample:

**THE SWORD OF THE LORD
AND OF GIDEON.**

“Saw ye not the clouds arise,
Little as a human hand?
Now it spreads along the skies,
Hangs o'er all the thirsty
land.”

BEAMS

**From Heaven Still
Descending!**

CLOUDS OF WITNESSES TES-
TIFY THEIR SINS
FORGIVEN.

**And Join the Ransomed
Heirs of Heaven!**

**YOUNG MEN AND MAIDENS
RAISE THEIR THANK-
FUL VOICES HIGH.**

Old Men and Children, Praise
the Lord of Earth and Sky!

From every stormy wind that
blows,
From every swelling tide of
woes,
There is a calm, a sure retreat—
'Tis found beneath the Mercy
Seat.

THE GREAT METHODIST RE-
VIVAL STILL BOOMING.

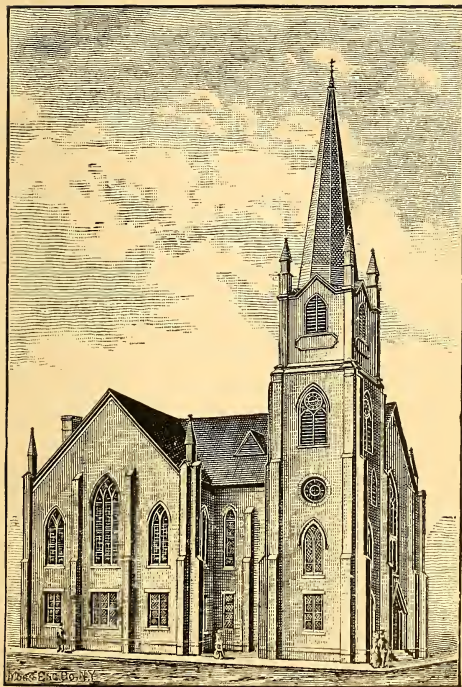
527 Bow to the Prince of Peace,
Eternal Truth and Love!

362 CONNECT THEMSELVES
WITH THE CHURCH.

The Membership Doubled and the Tide
Still Rolling in.

“All glory be to God on high,
And to the earth be peace.
Good - will henceforth from
Heaven to men
Begin and never cease.”

The *Gallipolis District News* literally gleamed with *good* news; not only with reference to the work being done in the city, but throughout the District. Between the alternatives of deciding whether the revival at Gallipolis was largely instrumental in inspiring the results, or whether the descent of the Holy Spirit throughout the District was independently co-incident, we leave the reader to judge. In either view of the case, God is glorified in the triumphs achieved. Re-



GALLIPOLIS MEMORIAL M. E. CHURCH.



vivals were had in almost every charge, and the total number of conversions reported by the presiding Elder to May²¹, is *twenty-six hundred and fifty-one*.

A few of the pastors on the District received assistance directly from Gallipolis. Rev. L. C. Haddox, at Wellston, was favored with the help of Rev. P. P. Hamilton, a special evangelist, formerly a pastor in the Ohio Conference, but of recent years on the *Supernumerary* list, for the same reason that Bro. Bitler is in the local ranks, viz., to be an evangelist without appointment. The number of conversions at Wellston is reported at more than *five hundred*. Most of the pastors of the District labored without ministerial help, and the wide spread results affirm the fact that the revival was general. It would be impossible to estimate the amount of influence exerted upon the general aggregate of these marvellous results by the Gallipolis meeting. Noised abroad by the press; witnessed by some of the preachers who went away imbued with its spirit; wafted by the winds or heralded by common report, it became the centre of an attraction, and the source of an inspiration, that was felt far and wide. When the Holy Spirit condescends to employ every avenue of influence, and the work of revival is general, it is impossible to dissect and analyze primary causes. Here is a poetic view

of the subject that discovers a vein of eloquence. At a jubilee meeting held at Proctorville, in the same District, one brother, in giving in his experience said, as he was going home one evening he fell to gazing on the face of the Heavens. It seemed as if the moon never shone so beautifully, the stars never twinkled so brightly, and the sky never seemed so deep and blue. And as he beheld, he saw the seven stars, and he thought of the seven spirits of God and the seven golden candlesticks. Then his eye caught the great dipper, and it came to him all at once, that the Lord had been using that dipper to pour out salvation on this people for the last six weeks. Without doubt the whole District was refreshed from the same "dipper," and salvation flooded the churches as never before.

RIVER MEN.

One very characteristic feature of the Gallipolis revival, was, that men were converted in schools or groups. A local paper gave the names of twenty-seven river men that had joined the Methodist church. There were represented master and pilot, mates, engineers, stewards, cooks, striker engineer, pantry-men, cabin watchmen, cabin boys, firemen and deck hands. Among the instances of unconscious influence was one that occurred on board the steamer *Boone*,

plying between Charleston and Cincinnati. The Pilot, a gentleman well advanced in years and experience, in looking down from the pilot house upon a boy of about fifteen years of age, noticed something strange in his demeanor. The boy had been very profane, but on this trip he was quiet and serious, and spent some of his time in reading a pocket testament. This roused the pilot to enquire of the captain, "What's the matter with that boy." The captain replied that the boy had been to the Methodist church and got converted. They both agreed that it was a good thing for the boy, and that he ought to be encouraged in it. On the down trip to Cincinnati and all the way back, the pilot watched the boy, and did some thinking besides. He came to the conclusion, that "if there was some Divine power which could do that for a boy, why not for a man?" On his return to Gallipolis, though not in the habit of going to church, he thought he would go and see for himself. During the service he stood up and said, "Christians pray for me." His wife had been converted sitting by his side in the church, and he afterward went to the altar and was saved.

Our sources of information will not justify an exact estimate of the number of river men saved, but there were others besides those already enumerated; and their number, habits, and inaccessi-

bility, taken into account, makes a marvellous record, and serves to illustrate the power and extent of the Gallipolis revival. It even justifies the display headlines of the *Gallipolis Bulletin* of Feb. 9th, which we append in fac simile. It may serve as a sample, for it is well to remember, that chief among Bro. Bitler's methods is the employment of all friendly agencies to "noise abroad" the work of God. In this case the press of the city was not only friendly, but it may be said to have flamed with revival news, and was made the subject of special comment on several different occasions by both ministers in charge.

609!

WEIGHING ANCHOR!

Are You All
Aboard?

A SLOWING DOWN OF THE
GREAT UPHEAVAL!

Yet the Good Old Ship
of Zion lingers in
the Harbor,

WAITING FOR THE LAST
BELATED STRAGGLER
TO COME IN.

Sweet Farewells and Waving
Signals Wafted to the Happy
Crew, and Borne
Along Like

SPICY BREEZES, 'NEATH CEY-
LON'S SKY OF BLUE.

Jacob, With All His Tribes, Shall
Sing, and Judah Weep No More,

When Every Soul On Board that Ship
Shall Reach the Shining Shore!

There everlasting spring abides,
And never-withering flowers;
Death, like a narrow sea, divides
This heavenly land from ours.

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand dressed in living green;
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between.

Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood
Should fright us from the shore.

CHAPTER XIII.

Gallipolis Revival, Concluded.

GREAT SINNERS—DELIVERANCE FROM BONDAGE—
SALOON INTERESTS—AMUSING PERSECUTIONS—
TESTIMONIAL FROM THE MAYOR OF THE CITY—
“REFUGEES”—PROHIBITION OF THE LIQUOR
TRAFFIC.

Experiences that dwell on previous wickedness are to be discouraged. The tendency to boast of former badness savors of pride, and seems like glorying in shame. But we must not forget that the salvation of a great sinner is a better illustration of the power of grace, than an ordinary case of conversion. The grace that comes to the heart of a child, saves it from the commission of sin, and terminates the life in piety, is greater than an abrupt transformation from vice to virtue, and more to be desired. But it seems less a marvel. That “Jesus came to save sinners,” has a better illustration in the rescue of the profligate and abandoned, than the conversion of youth, where the possibilities of future sin are hidden from view, and grace interposes a barrier that

turns the current of years to a better life. The testimony of a saved man, whose life has not violated the social standards of morality, has a *positive* worth. That of one whose record has been one of flagrant violations may have a *negative*, as well as a positive value, as an exhibition of the power of grace. If it be given with any motive, other than that of glorifying God, it is justly subject to criticism, and ought to be discouraged. With this end in view, we have ventured a few glimpses into the pit whence some of these converts were taken. It must not be supposed that such cases were so numerous as to give caste and color to the revival. Naturally more stress was laid upon them by the people and the press, but the great majority of converts were from families usually represented in the church or congregation.

First among the "hard cases," we think it just to rank the moralist. That the revival reached some of this class who had been too good to repent, and too hardened to yield, and who had passed through former revivals without any material change, must be accepted as proof of its power, scarcely paralleled by the conversion of the most abandoned sinner. If the reader doubts the propriety of classing these with hard cases, we reply that St. Paul had the same class in view when he said, "they being ignorant of God's

righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." They are hard to reach, and many of them stood the fire of all that marvellous pentecost without a sign of surrender. Past revivals, personal appeals, visible demonstrations of the power of God, and more than six hundred conversions about them, left them more firmly intrenched than ever before. True, their ranks were broken and depleted, but it seemed to take them longer to yield to God and receive the Savior, after bowing at the altar, than others who came all the way from flagrant sin.

In the preparation of this volume we have found it difficult to secure the various phases of personal testimony as they were presented at the meeting, and it has been made a delicate task to treat the subject, because a number whose cases were so remarkable as to justify special mention, are desirous that the past be forgotten and its record omitted. In deference to this request we make no mention of some experiences that belong to this chapter. On one occasion Bro. Bitler desired to know how many persons were present that could testify to the following, viz., That they had been addicted to strong drink; that they had experienced a change while at the altar; and since that time, they were either de-

livered from the appetite entirely, or could now deny themselves without inconvenience. *Twenty-seven* men stood up in response to that inquiry. The same question was put with regard to profanity, and it was desired to know how many persons could testify that heretofore they swore almost unconsciously, as if it had become a "second nature;" and who had experienced the same change at the altar, and now were free from either the desire or tendency to swear. *Eighty-six* persons arose in response to this. Bro. Bitler then inquired for a lawyer if any were present, when some one said that Judge H——, was in the house. Addressing him, Bro. Bitler wanted to know if this testimony would be taken in court. The Judge replied in the affirmative, and the witnesses were seated.

We give the facts without attempting an explanation of the philosophy of this change. That it may prove but temporary, in some cases, we have no doubt. That temptation may assail them, is proved by the fact, that "the servant is not above his master." Whether deliverance from an appetite, or an appetency, is more than a mental change, arising from a moral transformation, we leave the reader to surmise. It cannot be doubted, however, that men are delivered from what are usually termed appetites for stim-

ulates, narcotics, etc., in many instances. Whether it be simply the triumph of moral forces over the physical nature, or whether it be noetic—originating in the mind—is a question that does not trouble the helpless inebriate, or inveterate sinner. The fact of deliverance is beyond doubt, and any sinner may be saved.

The *saloon interests* of Gallipolis were very materially effected by the revival. Aside from the direct influence of the meeting, there was an indirect influence, that seemed to pervade the whole community, and saloonists suffered most. Receipts fell off in a few instances, from the usual Saturday night income, of from seventy-five and one hundred dollars, to the meagre sums of three and four dollars. Among smaller concerns the tills were sorely destitute of change. This statement is verified by competent men, and the fraternity is reported as “grumbling now, and holding on for better times.” An article from Rev. F. R. Crooks, to the *Western Christian Advocate*, has the following on “Gallipolis Saloon-keepers and the Revival.”

“The Gallipolis saloon-keepers are as mad as “March hares,” and are cursing the preachers and the Church. Their “blases of peesness” look as lonesome as our churches formerly did. These human vultures have had it all their own way for

a long time. Steadily they have moved up from the lowest quarters of the city until they occupy the finest locations, and as steadily have they raked into their bloody tills the money of the city and country on both sides of the river until, like "Jeshurun," "they waxed fat and kicked." But the day of retribution has come. Saloons, which before the revival took in from \$75 to \$100, receive now from \$2 to \$3. The leading saloonist was so fearful that the others were getting his trade that he sent spies to all the saloons in the city, but alas, not a sound broke the awful silence. "Gone to the revival." It is amusing to see them out on the street drumming up custom. As a converted toper was passing a saloon the bartender stepped to the door and said: "Come in, come in." "Not now." "Come in and drink at my expense." "No, sir." "Bin up gittin' some of Bitler's religion, have ye! I have just taken two drinks, and that's the religion that suits me." "I have tried your religion for four years; have given you all my money, and a mortgage on my body and soul, and I believe I like Bitler's best." I submit this question, Can the Church defend these young converts against the human ghouls?"

The convert referred to is reported, at this writing (June 4), to be of the same mind he

was in the winter, and prefers the Bitler religion still.

We find among the revival notes, in a Gallipolis paper, a brief statement that seems to indicate that the author of the above article is not held in very high esteem by the "Sons of Belial." It reads as follows :

"During protracted meeting services at Chambersburg, last week, some miscreant shaved the tail of Rev. Crooks' horse, cut the bridle to pieces, and cut and carried away the side pieces to his saddle to sole their 'ornery' shoes with. If Rev. Crooks comes up with him he'll be apt to convert him by the old patent plan, which is next thing to sudden death."

Once, on a previous occasion, the writer gave offense to the liquor fraternity in Gallipolis, and "some miscreant" retaliated with his knife. But nothing was hurt but the harness, and we drove away from the vicinity of a leading saloon proud as a martyr.

Observing in one of the Gallipolis papers a very remarkable statement with reference to the effect of the meeting on the morals of the city, we wrote to the Mayor to ascertain its truth, and received the following document in reply :

MARCH 17, A. D. 1885.

C. F. CREIGHTON, *Circleville, O.:*

MY DEAR BROTHER—Your kind and I assure

your welcome letter of yesterday came to-day, and I take pleasure in answering your question. I will give you a short statement from my criminal docket, and you will see a vast difference in the amount of crime being committed in Gallipolis:

During the month of Dec., 1883, arrests,	-	50
" " " Jan., 1884, "	-	31
" " " Feb., " "	-	30
Up to March 17, 1884, arrests,	- - -	17
		<hr/>
		128
During the month of Dec., 1884, arrests,	-	29
" " " Jan., 1885, "	-	16
" " " Feb. <i>not one arrest</i> ,	-	00
Up to March 17, number of arrests,	- -	10
		<hr/>
		55

I think you can see by this that the coming of Bro. Bitler and the Spirit of the Lord has done wonders for Gallipolis, and it is not only for to-day, but I am fully satisfied that it is for all time to come. You will notice that no arrests were made during the month of February. When I made my monthly report to the City Council at the end of that month, *no arrests*, it was ordered spread upon the minutes as something unheard of. I hope you may have as good, if not better, results in your city as we have had in this place, and may the Lord be with you.

Respectfully,

JNO. M. ALEXANDER, Mayor.

This paper, under his official seal, and signed by the Mayor of the city, is a contribution to revivalistic literature that commends itself to the practical sense of all lovers of law and order. It was presented among the responses at our Jubilee meeting held at Circleville, and its reading evoked a thundering doxology.

REFUGEES.

Among the "Refugees" that fled from the great revival was a saloonist, that "found no rest for the sole of his foot" when last heard from. The Pastor of West Rushville Charge, Rev. Ira M. Brashares, contributes the following:

About the last of February, 1885, there appeared at Bremen, Ohio—a village more than one hundred miles from Gallipolis—a stranger whose habit was somewhat neglected. Though once fine, it was much worn, and indicated a declension in worldly prosperity. In conversation with a citizen of the place, he said he was from Gallipolis, that for years past he had had a prosperous business, and all went well until recently. Bitler's revival had depressed his trade, and he was looking for a better location. When asked as to what he was engaged in, he replied that he was a saloon keeper, but there was no trade in that line. His property and stock were depreciated,

and he was willing to sell at fifty cents on the dollar, and he wanted a town without a Methodist church. The Bremen citizen pointed to the spire of the Methodist church near by, and presumed that he wouldn't be suited there. The saloonist then inquired about the next town up the Ohio Central R. R; when informed that Rushville, and West Rushville, were but four and a half miles distant, he wanted to know if they had live preachers over there. The citizen informed him that Rushville had just closed a revival with one hundred conversions, and West Rushville was then in the midst of one in which sixty had been converted, and the work just fairly begun. Muttering something about revivals he turned his back on Bremen, and like Dryden's bird of passage, "northward he took his way."

The following from the *Ross County Register* of February 28, 1885, is an editorial that serves a double purpose, and we reproduce it entire.

Not long since we remember to have published an account, from the *Gallipolis Journal*, of a remarkable religious revival then in progress in that town, in which it was mentioned as if it were a singular feature of the occasion, that no "special effort was made to pulverize the rum power." And yet we read that the habitues of saloons and saloon-keepers were

among those drawn into the meetings, and that not a few of the first class, and some of the latter, had become converts to religion and had started out to lead a new life. We are reminded of this matter at this time on reading an account in a Waverly paper of the recent coming to that town of a Gallipolis saloon-keeper, in search of a new location, because, as he said, his business in that town had been ruined by the religious uprising referred to, and he had found it necessary to go elsewhere. Can not ministers draw from this a suggestion worthy of their serious attention in the matter of conducting religious revivals? It has often occurred to us that if more work had been given to the preaching of old-fashioned gospel sermons, and less to special efforts to "crush the rum power," that both temperance and religion would be far in advance of what they are to-day. For after all is said and done, the most effectual way ever devised to put down the liquor business is to persuade people not to drink. A religious revival like the one lately occurring in Gallipolis is worth more to the cause of temperance than a dozen Maine laws. The one draws liquor drinkers and sellers into the churches — makes friends of them, as it were; while the other, in antagonizing and treating them as outcasts and criminals, drives them away from the churches and often makes them hate the very name of religion. There is good reason for the Church to change its methods in this regard.

That weekly papers at a distance published accounts of that great revival, not only serves to

indicate its marvelous character, but also the immense advantage of securing the favor of the local press. The incident quoted from a Waverly paper is but another flying spark, and if we could but survey the whole field, scintillations of various sorts, would doubtless appear in many places. The lesson drawn from the facts stated, is hardly legitimate. We have heard others declare, in the light of the Gallipolis and Circleville revivals, that *prohibition* was not the thing; but while viewing the work from its centre, and from every side, we were of a different opinion. If legal prohibition had been in vogue at the time of these revivals, the number of conversions would have been increased by hundreds. Had law closed the pit, gospel would have captured the whole concern, and kept it captured too. The one unanimous answer given by saloon-keepers when urged to become christians, was, "I can't give up my business." With no "law" to help them to let go, they clung to it in hope of better times. With a Maine law, prohibiting the saloon under adequate penalties, the road in that direction would not have been the brilliant financial temptation it was, and the number saved would have been proportionately augmented. A few men that sold liquor were converted, but the whole number in both revivals did not exceed seven or

eight; and if the after influence of the saloons is counted, we paid dear for them, by the loss of a greater number that were recaptured by the arts of the liquor fraternity. The few that were saved are splendid trophies, but they were exceptional men, and naturally out of place in a saloon.

We needed prohibition after the revival more than before. For, with a horde of hungry fellows waiting for their old customers, and many of them using every device to secure them; sluicing the pavements with beer wash, and loading the very atmosphere with its fumes, it was an awful gauntlet for reformed men to run, and required sleepless vigilance on the part of the church to protect and encourage them. It was a defensive war the writer can never forget. Any pastor, that has tried to conserve the fruits of a great revival, will be a firm advocate of Constitutional and Statutory prohibition. Let it come as it may, but close the grog shops, and give the boys an even chance.

For the aggressive work of soul-saving, and for the defense of the church in keeping them saved, we want prohibition, and, by the grace of God WE ARE GOING TO HAVE IT.

CHAPTER XIV.

CIRCLEVILLE REVIVAL.

ELEMENTS OF PREPARATION — FIELD OF BATTLE.

Heralded by the news of the great revival at Gallipolis, Bro. Bitler came to Circleville with a degree of prestige that made his coming a matter of popular interest. His fame had been so thoroughly "noised abroad" that he was not only expected to do great things, but became at once an object of curiosity. It was at times amusing to see the inquisitive crowds that gazed upon him as he passed by, and hear the various remarks expressive of all sorts of opinion as to what he would do. Not only the results at Gallipolis, but the fact that at the session of the Ohio Conference held in Circleville his determination to become an evangelist was made public and officially acted upon, gave unusual interest to his work in this place. Some of the brethren of this charge had taken up the discussion where the Conference left it, and were very decidedly of the opinion that the young man had made a mistake in locating in order to

enter the evangelistic work. This state of things might ordinarily embarrass any christian minister, but if Bro. Bitler ever felt it, he never showed it, and dashed into his work as if totally oblivious to surroundings. The general interest which had been awakened was greatly to his advantage, and as a result no time was lost in securing the attention of the people.

In anticipation of a great revival, and without regard to the coming of an evangelist, one noticeable feature deserves to be remarked, viz., that the faithful christian workers of the church had from the first expressed implicit *faith* in the coming of a remarkable revival. The announcement of his coming increased their expectation and stimulated faith, but aside from this their *belief* in what was in store for them was remarkable. This found abundant proof when, near the close of the Gallipolis meeting, it was announced that his coming was very uncertain and that they must prepare themselves to be finally disappointed. The result was such an expression of continued faith as the pastor never before witnessed, and, since he shared in it himself, there was no temptation to doubt the final result. The following circular, written by the pastor and addressed to every member of the church, may serve to indicate the spirit of expectancy that

prevailed, as well as one of the items of general preparation resorted to in enlisting the church for effective work :

“A SERIOUS CALL TO THE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS
OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
OF CIRCLEVILLE, OHIO.

“*Members of the Official Board (Stewards, Trustees and Leaders); Officers and Teachers of the Sabbath School; Members of the Church and Congregation :*

“DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS—As your servant in the Gospel of Christ, permit me to sound the trumpet call for a grand rally of all our forces. Believing that the time has come for a general advance all along the line, and that God will lead us on to one of the greatest moral victories we have ever witnessed, I hereby appeal to every one of you, both old and young, to be present at all our services during the present week, so that it shall be the grand *rallying week* of what shall be known in the future as the great revival of 1885.”

We began the meetings on the fourth day of January, and labored incessantly until reinforced by Bro. Bitler. During about two weeks of that time Mrs. E. A. Whitridge, of Cincinnati, rendered valuable service, and the work of holiness

was greatly revived under her efficient labors. We were not rewarded with a great number of conversions, but felt that the way was being prepared for future results.

On the evening before the coming of the evangelist we enjoyed a season of Pentecost, and five souls were happily converted. We speak of this season of preparation for a double purpose. First, to encourage those who may anticipate the coming of an evangelist in the work of preparing the way. Unless the preliminary work is protracted too long, so as to weary the people, its importance can hardly be over-estimated. Second, Bro. Bitler desires that mention be made of the fact that in this meeting he found the elements so ready to his hand that no time was lost in getting into the heart of the revival, and that this peculiar ripeness was exceptional. Most of the converts of the preceding revival had kept "in the spirit" during the year, and the young people were eager for conquest. The "old guard" of *regulars*, that are always at their post, were "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," and wounded sinners were beginning to show symptoms of conviction.

Thoroughly acquainted with the altar and its surroundings, a multitude of christian workers

were ready to kneel there or gather about it at the first call, while quite a number were becoming familiar with the work of personal solicitation, both in the congregation and out of it. Every church has a band of saints, and however few in number, or great the hindrances that stand in the way, if they will get such a consecration to the work of God that they stand ready to go to work when the word is given, a revival is not far distant. Alas, for many, they seem to think that when fully consecrated they have only to sit down and let the Lord use them. But the Lord can't use sitting soldiers. They must *get up and go at it* in a hand to hand conflict; and if timid and fearful they must *keep at it* until they conquer themselves, and then they will begin to conquer for God. In the great Circleville revival the multitudes were "hand picked," chiefly by personal persuasion in the audience. The few that came without individual solicitation owe their coming largely to the influence of currents that were kept moving by this constant work of "compelling" others to come in. When the workers wearied, and the attack was delayed, the work lagged, and but for the exhaustion that compelled us to rest, we have no doubt that five hundred other souls could have been reached and saved. If we were asked for

the chief factor of influence that characterized this revival, other than the divine influence and the personal power of the evangelist, we should reply, with emphasis, that it depended almost wholly on *personal solicitation in the congregation*. Starting with the old soldiers—many of them a year old—each new convert became a missionary, and our ranks filled up as the battle went on. Instead of spiking the guns as they were taken, they were turned on the enemy and made to do execution from the first. No deference was paid to the tastes of that class of sinners that resent personal appeals in the congregation. Their threats of staying away from the meetings were seldom executed, and the workers were given to understand that an occasional haughty rebel had better be kept at home, than that a multitude perish for want of friendly hands to pull them out of the fire.

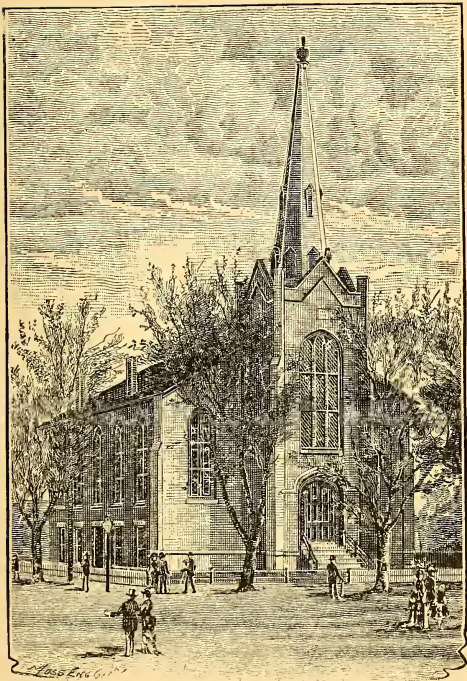
Sometimes the congregation was dismissed with the benediction for the purpose of excusing any that were not willing to be subjected to the annoyance of personal appeals, but, so far as we could see, nobody went away. A hundred or two could have been easily spared, and their room utilized in getting about among the mass that remained, for, during the whole series, the immense throng crowded to the very pulpit as if hungry for the bread of life.

It is a part of Bro. Bitler's plan to spend no time with dead church members, and if the church will not go to work at once he must do a vast amount of personal work himself, and when a few are saved he sets them to work. In several instances he has been obliged to reach his hand beyond the old members and get hold of fresh material to begin with, but precious time was lost in getting started. Unless the church wakes up, at some time, and becomes directly identified with the conversion of sinners in this way, it is almost certain that the young converts will be left in bad hands when the revival is over.

THE FIELD OF BATTLE.

On the ninth day of February the "man of God" whom we had been anxiously awaiting, came to our relief and took the forces in hand at our request. On the first day the "banner" was flung to the breeze, and the scripture mottoes were hung up on the walls of the church. The multitude in attendance, the first half hour of spirited singing, and the presence of the evangelist himself, combined to make the impression universal that a revival is coming.

The very first prayer cries for *five hundred souls*, and it is doubtful if even the devil has



CIRCLEVILLE M. E. CHURCH.

any doubts about the revival. We have previously intimated that very characteristic policy that runs through Bro. Bitler's methods from the beginning, viz., to make the most of advertisement. He utilizes every favorable indication and brings it immediately to notice. Hence, in perfect accord with this method the first service is wholly given to *an account of the marvelous revival at Gallipolis*. No more thrilling sermon can be delivered than an account of what God is doing. It will strengthen believers, attract sinners, and lead all to anticipate a repetition of the same results. So it proved, and though no effort was made to secure seekers that night, the meeting was an immense contribution of every element of power for future aggressive work. In this connection it may be well to remark that the evangelist continued to utilize the impressive scenes witnessed at Gallipolis from time to time, until we had a sufficient amount of the same material for which to praise God at home. In recounting that work he informed the audience that he might in the future become somewhat liable to criticism for so frequent reference to Gallipolis, and illustrated his danger by the story of a pastor who had formerly resided at *Jamestown*. On moving to another place he carried his attachments with him, and kept up

an incessant reference to Jamestown. What happened at Jamestown, and how things were done at Jamestown, were so frequently referred to, that one dear sister had inadvertantly conceived the idea that Jamestown wasn't far from heaven. So on one occasion, while narrating her experience, she said that she was striving very hard to get to heaven. Sometimes she felt sure she would get there, but at other times she had grave doubts; but, on the whole, she believed that even if she failed at last to get to heaven, she was sure that she would get as far as Jamestown. It was very evident that heavenly influences had visited Gallipolis, but with a repetition of the same precious manifestations at Circleville the temptation to revisit the former place very soon disposed of itself, and Bro. Bitler gracefully transferred his references to the latter. We can furnish no adequate description of the force and thrilling pathos with which the evangelist reviewed the scenes and incidents of the Gallipolis revival. It was, so far as eloquent and vivid description could make it, a repetition of the revival itself, and the audience were moved, melted and fired, to a degree beyond anything we had ever before witnessed.

CHAPTER XV.

Circleville Revival, Continued.

THREE HUNDRED CONVERSIONS IN THREE WEEKS.
YOUNG MEN—NOISING IT ABROAD—"HOLDING
OUT"—HOLINESS COMMENDED—YOUNG PEOPLE'S
MEETINGS—FIVE HUNDRED AND FORTY CON-
VERSIONS.

Reserving the *minutia* of Mr. Bitler's methods for another place, we omit them from their proper order in this chapter, and proceed with a general account of what transpired.

From the date of presenting the altar for penitents—about the third night of the meeting—the number of seekers steadily increased, and in three weeks the number of conversions had reached *three hundred*. An average of one hundred conversions per week must be regarded as phenomenal, especially in view of the fact that they were chiefly adults.

There had been very few religious young men in the city. An effort to organize a Y. M. C. A. had failed for want of timber. It was reported that just prior to the great revival, only nine

christian young men could be found in all the churches. This was an understatement, for the Methodist church could show a greater number as the fruit of the previous year, together with others formerly converted. It is true, however, that devoted young men were scarce in all the churches. Among those converted was a large number of young men, and during the first three weeks of the meeting their numbers exceeded that of the young ladies. A daily service at 10 a. m., was given to them, and conducted almost wholly by themselves, at which a number were led to seek the Lord; and the reports of conversions in their meetings became a factor of daily interest to the meetings at large. The afternoon service was devoted to the same controlling idea of getting sinners converted. The altar was presented, and almost every occasion was marked with results. While these afternoon meetings were run on this line, and the whole trend of thought, conversation, and work, sought the conversion of sinners, they were by no means devoid of variety, and the evangelist was especially happy in presenting something new for each service. For instance, on one occasion after reading a part of the second chapter of Acts, and briefly commenting on the wisdom of *noising abroad* the work of the Holy Spirit, he asked

the congregation to report the evidences of God's presence in this city. He called out testimony from perhaps fifty persons, by urging the people to speak of cases of awakening, conversations had with sinners, promises made to attend the meetings or seek the Lord, and such other indications of the presence of the Holy Spirit as had come under their observation. This was early in the series of meetings and before many signs of general awakening were observed; but on bringing in all this testimony, the congregation were led to see that God was working in every part of the city, and among all classes of the community. Bro. Bitler and a few others believed that such was the case before these reports were made, but after such testimony the whole church believed it and marvelled. This was another method of *noising it abroad*, and its result was an inspiration to the church that set them to work with renewed courage, and it made sinners feel like guilty men with somebody watching them.

At one stage of the meeting, the chief reply that workers met was, "I'm afraid if I start I can't hold out." This went to such a pitch that an impression began to prevail that backsliders made up the mass of sinners; and indeed their numbers in every community is alarming. In

this case, the fact of their numbers began to be used against the revival, and it was said that in the future the whole list of converts would go the same way. This impression against revivals was becoming a stumbling block to very many. The devil sought to array an army of backsliders against us, and not only block the way for the coming of raw sinners, but vitiate and capture the whole meeting. This was met in the afternoon service, by the evangelist raising the question of "*holding out.*" Beginning with those converted at the previous meeting he asked them to stand up. Then proceeded with those of last week, and so on back to more than fifty years until all the christians in the house were on their feet. As each class, representing a week or a year, stood up, they were asked to testify as to God's ability to keep them during that length of time, and as they did so the whole ground was covered and the host of saved people were arrayed against an army of backsliders. Thus God's ability to keep men saved was made as prominent as the matter of blacksliding had been before, and the impression was made that guilty desertions were inexcusable and wholly unnecessary. These are but samples of the means employed to awaken interest and keep things fresh and new.

It may be doubted whether or not the subject

of personal holiness ought to have been more frequently presented. These large afternoon meetings were made up chiefly of young converts and older christians, and it seemed specially propitious that the "riches of grace" be presented, and the privilege of believers to enjoy "the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of peace," urged upon their acceptance. This was not done to any great extent, except as the pastor occasionally introduced it. We are firmly of the opinion that if the Circleville meeting had been run on the "double track" of *full salvation and the conversion of sinners*, from the beginning, with the general mass meetings conducted just as they were, and the afternoons devoted more specifically to the subject of christian holiness, that the results would have been greater in the aggregate, and the whole mass would have been pervaded with a spirit of grace and power beyond that which characterizes the ordinary revival. Sinners in attendance at the day meetings would have been reached just as surely, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost on the young converts and older workers, would have toned up the night meetings to a spiritual level far beyond that already enjoyed. Experience with both methods has forced this conviction, both as to successful work in bringing sinners to Christ, and in secur-

ing permanence and stability in the after results. This brief criticism must not be misunderstood. There was much of real spiritual food, and the evangelist was not wanting in applying the elements of divine promise and provision. It was a good place to grow in grace, and many were spiritually quickened. The lack we urge is largely one of method. We insist, that the only characteristic improvement, that it seems to us, would have greatly added to the splendid success of this great meeting, would have been, a vein of deep spiritual power that is known to characterize the work of christian holiness when it is specifically presented. A wave of this sort, beginning early in the revival, and sweeping across the entire series of day meetings, would have added to their effectiveness by making them a mighty factor of spiritual power, and an abiding force after the transient excitement was over and the personal power of the evangelist ceased to be felt. This suggestion has grown out of a degree of familiarity with this work, and a candid view of all its details and after labors, and will be appreciated by those whose experience in permanent and powerful revivals has made them competent to judge. Bro. Bitler himself acknowledges the force of this suggestion. While heartily endorsing the specific work of entire sanctification, and

as he trusts, in the enjoyment of the same grace he received at Urbana, he has received a commission especially addressed to the conversion of sinners. As in the case of Rev. Thomas Harrison, whose testimony on this subject rings out clear and strong, and yet whose efforts are wholly exerted and powerfully blessed to the conversion of sinners, so Bro. Bitler's gifts are peculiarly adapted to the same specific work. It would not be wise in his case perhaps, to attempt to supply the demand we have referred to. Let the *focus* be held on the consciences of the unregenerate, but the *ideal* of a great revival, in all its apostolic fullness, is more nearly reached, and most powerfully realized, when the *Baptism of the Holy Ghost* as the special privilege of believers is clearly presented and tremendously experienced. All the fruits of the Spirit were visible at this meeting, and in general the power and presence of the Holy Ghost was felt. Its outward manifestation however, was chiefly seen in the *awakening* and *conversion* of sinners. We urge the importance of pressing the work of holiness among believers, as simply an additional element of revival power, which the *pastor* may see fit to urge "clearly, strongly, and explicitly," in perfect harmony with the work and methods of the evangelist.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S MEETING.

Each evening a service for young people was held, beginning an hour before the main service in the audience room. Besides about a hundred who were christians, others attended who were not, but the meeting was not intended so much to secure immediate results as to prepare for work. The hour was spent in prayer and testimony, and in securing volunteers for the field of battle. The necessity and advantages of personal appeals in the congregation, was clearly presented and urged; and as many as were willing to go out on this mission as soon as the invitation was given, were requested to rise. Then those who felt unable to take the field, but desired strength to do so, were invited to rise, and the remaining moments were spent kneeling about the altar, and pleading with God for grace and power to do this work. Thus prepared for duty the whole band of young people were marched right into the main congregation.

This method was very effective, both in developing a company of workers, and in securing results. If it had not been so prematurely discontinued it doubtless would have become the chief factor of the series of meetings, but it was

destined to be crushed to death very soon after its inauguration. The crowds that filled the upper room long before the time of service, made it difficult to reserve places for the young people, and finally we were compelled to abandon the idea of a separate meeting.

Indeed, the audience room was so crowded that it was impossible to make room for penitents to kneel at the altar. When the lower room was thrown open it was also filled, and as a result two meetings were held at the same time, with an altar at each meeting, and conversions constantly occurring. Subsequent methods of employing the lower room as a place of inquiry for seekers, and of appointing occasional hours in which to meet and converse with them, will be recited elsewhere. The young people, though interrupted in their plan of work, were not left entirely without special meetings. Occasional hours were devoted to them, and after their numbers had been greatly increased by new recruits, some of their meetings were immense gatherings. Their meetings on Saturday evenings, and on the Sabbath, were always attended with splendid results and marked manifestations of power. On one occasion Bro. Bitler spent a Saturday evening assisting at a meeting out of town, and left the pastor to con-

duct the young peoples' meeting alone. It was the first one of the kind announced, and we went to the church expecting possibly a good attendance. On approaching the door we saw by the numbers standing about, that the door had not been unlocked, and it was nearly time for service. Possibly some had gone away, and we were greatly hurt at this apparent carelessness on the part of the sexton. What was our surprise to find, on coming near, that the doors were wide open! The aisles were crowded, and nobody else could get in but the preacher. What an audience! The following brief reference is clipped from the *Circleville Daily Herald* of March 2:

“The pastor had charge of the service, Mr. Bitler having gone to Kingston to spend the evening and to assist in the great revival now in progress at that place. It was one of the most remarkable services of the series. The meeting was for the young people only, and was held in the lecture room of the church. It was thought that this room was sufficiently large to accommodate all, but before the service began the room was packed. The aisles and the rostrum were crowded with young people, and many were accommodated in the class rooms joining the lecture room. It is said that

two hundred young people were turned away, being unable to get into the church. Mr. Mr. Creighton talked about the 'rich young man who came to Jesus.' After the sermon the congregation was dismissed by the benediction, and all anxious ones were invited to remain. The meeting was attended with great results. One of the most remarkable features of the meetings, at this stage, is that most of the subjects of prayers mentioned are father or mother! It is not a strange or uncommon thing to hear a father or mother mention a wayward son or daughter as a subject of prayer, but now the opposite is heard."

During the whole progress of this revival the young people were the most prominent figures in it. Whether as workers in the congregation, or kneeling at the altar, or crowding the platform, or composing the "chorus" that led the singing, they were always in the majority, and must be counted in, just as they were counted on, to do a vast amount of good. What is a church without young people? Since a very large majority of all that enter the kingdom of grace do so in their youth, the church, pastor, evangelist or camp-meeting, that does not make large provision for them cannot be more than half successful in winning souls for

Christ. Their meetings at Circleville, whether at the church or colosseum, continued to be a centre of interest and a source of power, and Bro. Bitler's peculiar adaptation to lead them, and consummate management of them as a working force, deserves to be mentioned as one of the prime causes that brought about the conversion of *five hundred and forty souls*.



CHAPTER XVI.

Circleville Revival, continued.

BEHIND THE SCENES.

PRIVATE TALK TO YOUNG MEN—AN ALTAR ON THE
STAGE.

It is remarkable to what extent Bro. Bitler is able to reach and rouse young men. His personal tact appears at best advantage while working among them. Naturally buoyant, of a sanguine temperament, and possessed of a degree of suavity that introduces him without the faintest trace of embarrassment, he enters their presence as a personal genius, and finds a cordial reception at once.

Whether in groups on the street, or massed together in the rear of the audience, or associated as employees at some special industry, Bro. Bitler's coming is the signal for something of special interest to them, and his influence is as pervasive as a sun-beam. Somehow he wins them to himself, and then he wins them to Christ. It is not "animal magnetism." There is about as little of the animal in his make-up as belongs to chris-

tian genius. It would better be called angelic magnetism. Or, if the term be too celestial, we might call it mental magnetism. The first is too coarse and materialistic; the second is too fine and super-terrestrial; the third is too cold and mathematical. The fact is that he is born with certain natural qualifications that are in part mental and in part emotional, which, supplemented by an intense love for their salvation, adapts him at once to become a leader and an associate of young men.

He enters into their feelings, hopes, fears, ambitions, and tastes, with a naturalness and warmth that charms, and for the time controls them.

We are willing to compromise the terms employed in the above definitions by admitting that it is *personal magnetism*. This comprehensive, indefinable something, which is but another name for genius, Bro. Bitler possesses in a very marked degree. Unconsciously he attracts by nature, and when anointed as he is by the Spirit of Christ, his work with young men is singularly owned of God in their salvation.

Very early in the meetings, both at Gallipolis and Circleville, he announced

“A PRIVATE TALK TO YOUNG MEN.”

It was more than intimated that a degree of emphasis on the word *private*, would render the talk

something out of the common order ; and in view of the curiosity excited by the announcement, a fair representation of the young men, if not a large audience, was expected. None were to be admitted under thirteen years of age, and none over thirty-five. The older people were given to understand that the meeting concerned them by about as much as they were interested in the welfare of "the boys;" and fathers and mothers were requested to stay at home and spend the hour in earnest prayer for their salvation. To what extent this was heeded we cannot tell, but we know that it was sufficiently urged to make it impressive. Admission in both instances was by ticket. We give the following as a sample :

<p>TO YOUNG MEN ONLY, ~~~~~AT~~~~~ COLOSSEUM <i>SUNDAY, FEB. 22, 1885,</i> AT 2:30 P. M. ADMIT ONE.</p>	<p>PRIVATE TALK TO YOUNG MEN --BY-- J. S. BITLER.</p>
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The attendance at Gallipolis was reported as very large. "There was a general out-pouring of young men, and we believe it safe to say that it was one of the largest, if not the largest, gathering of young men ever assembled in the city."

The attendance at *Circleville* was simply immense. There were about nine hundred present. Such an audience! We wondered where they all came from. - It was an inspiration. Here, thought we, is the "flower of the army." Saloons against the church! God help the evangelist! Expectation was at a high pitch, and the occasion was one that comes but seldom in a life-time. The singing was grand. The opening prayer by Rev. S. A. Keen seemed indited from above. But the

ADDRESS!

How shall we report it? We dare not lift the veil and disclose the delicate truths, the awful secrets, the terrible sins it depicted. Would to God our readers were, for the present, all young men. Then we might noise abroad, *in terrorem*, the substance of this marvelous delineation. It was *inter nos*, and it must live only in memory as a spectral shadow of secret vice and moral degeneracy that curses and corrupts a majority of young men to the everlasting shame of our race, and as an argument of moral depravity that can never be answered. Perhaps the reader may want to know the ground of this assertion. The following may assist him. The topic was taken from Ecc. xi:9 "Rejoice, O young man in thy

youth ; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes ; but know thou, that *for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.*” As a companion text, Gal. v:19 was read, and “such like” “works of the flesh” were unearthed, and every man’s memory and conscience was submitted to the ordeal of a trying test. The “talk” was introduced by a modest statement of his purpose, and a disclaimer of any intention to deliver a sermon or exhortation on the duties of chastity and the future retributions awaiting the violations of moral purity. It was the intention rather to produce facts and testimony from competent authorities in proof that the judgments of God were executed on offenders *here* as well as hereafter ; and in the hope of warning them of present danger, he attempted a duty that few persons could consistently perform. Preachers’ lips were sealed. Fathers and Mothers were too confiding and too loving to fear that such truth was needed. The knowledge of medical practitioners was too largely confined to their own circles, and somebody must lift the veil who can get a hearing without offending the professional proprieties. Religious sentiments seemed to be studiously avoided throughout the main body of the address,

but the awful conviction of guilt was being enforced by a recital of facts that went home to the hearts of a multitude.

At times the applause was immense, and in spite of the delicateness of the subject and its direct application to many of the class addressed, the speaker had the sympathy of his audience from the beginning. It was brother talking to brothers with a terrible and tearful earnestness that sent the truth home to tingling ears. The contrast that closed the address and offered the purity of a christian life as an ideal of moral beauty, was charged with fervid exhortations to accept the Savior and cast off the "garments spotted by the flesh." At its close, young men willing to become christians were invited to remain for an inquiry meeting. The curtain was lowered, and the stage back of it was utilized for an inquiry room. An altar of prayer was improvised, and soon filled with young men. *Twelve souls were happily converted to God.* Among them were some that have since proved among the brightest of any that were rescued during the revival. Between the "acts" of the Holy Spirit in regenerating their souls, we sang, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," and the band that sang and prayed were perhaps among the happiest that ever stood on any stage.

Among those converted was a young man who had been previously addicted to drink. On his way to the Colosseum that afternoon, he remarked to a friend, that he was "going to see the side show." He was soon among the most serious, and behind the scenes he was most powerfully converted; and hastening home he told all he met of his wonderful deliverance.

The result of the meeting as a whole was salutary in every respect. The young men went away instructed, carrying impressions that were new, and stimulated to a better life. Fruit was gathered in later services as the product of this one, and the whole series received an impetus here that was felt through all its successive stages.

THE MASS MEETING

held at the Colosseum the same night was a signal victory.

Every available seat was taken, a hundred chairs were added from the church, many crowded the aisles, and yet a multitude were compelled to go away for want of room. Bro. Keen preached from the text, "Give me thy heart," and the service in every item was well adapted to seal the convictions of the afternoon and secure the conversion of young men. The curtain

was dropped, many ascended the stage and more than a score were converted. A revival that can be transferred from the hallowed surroundings of a Church and carried into a theatre without endangering its life must indeed be a vigorous meeting. Yet in this case, while many of the devoted ones feared the result, and a few became alarmed lest the new associations would dissipate every element of devotion, the revival went right on. Not only so, but it gained in depth and power and rolled a wave of salvation more than four feet high over the stage itself; where behind a gaudy curtain, surrounded by the scenery, and under the glare of electric lights, was repeated the tragedy of a methodist altar—weeping penitents, earnest prayers, powerful conversions, and jubilant doxologies.

The extremes of thought and feeling that characterized this day's work at the Colosseum, beginning with the searching "talk," which breathed the spirit and penalty of law, both natural and divine, and closing with the triumphs of gospel grace, made it a day unique, and typical of every genuine revival. We must unearth the hidden secrets of human depravity and alarm the conscience before we can hope to see a corresponding work of grace that will consummate the triumph of regeneration. Bro. Bitler's chief

element of power is along the line of *persuasion*. He never scolds; never accuses; seldom denounces particular vices; and indeed with the exception of this private talk, we never knew him to single out a sin to denounce it. In this case however, the whole ground of physical, moral and mental uncleanness, received such a disclosure as made men blush and guilt tremble as before the Lord. He has little of the judicial severity and keen fulmination that we suppose to have characterized the ministry of President Finney. Perhaps a little more of this element might be salutary, but it is not often that we find a union of the elements of denunciation and persuasion so combined in the same man as that one is made to help the other. Most men stand between these extremes and have just enough of both to cancel results, and not enough of either to force their way through to a complete victory. They need a baptism of the Holy Ghost that will either kindle their intensity, or melt down their severity into the spirit of a loving persuasion. We have heard sermons on *hell* that were cold, and others on judgment that would drive a sinner into a corner and set him to justifying himself; and the element of persuasion so utterly abandoned that instead of exciting a desire to "flee from the wrath to come," the sinner was

made to feel that it had come. Under such ministrations meetings are killed, and christian workers if they get into the spirit of the sermon, instead of becoming anxious to rescue the perishing, begin to feel that sinners deserve to be lampooned, and about the best thing to be done would be to get a cudgel and cut the work short in righteousness. Alas! for such preaching. It is not necessary to a truthful presentation of sin, righteousness and judgment. Paul said, "knowing the terror of the Lord we *persuade* men." Others knowing the terror of the Lord attempt to terrorize men; not by giving them the facts of moral depravity and the heinousness of sin, but by a system of denunciation that makes a breach between them and the altar, and then orders them to tumble into it. Under such a method, a sinner will sometimes strut and boast, and defiantly display his morality as equivalent in every sense to the ordinary christian life. Something is needed to penetrate his secret sins. If he can be made to "see his feet his feathers will fall." A vein of revelation like that which runs through the first chapter of Romans, if presented in brotherly sympathy, is sure to be effective. It is but natural that spiritual uncleanness is covered up and hidden from view. If it can be brought to light it will beget a sense of

shame ; and the simple intimation of being ushered into the presence of God, will do more to alarm the guilty soul than all the fulminations of pulpit eloquence can do without such a previous disclosure. It may seem that such work requires great courage. We reply that it requires more *grace* than grit, and that if the former is lacking the ends of courage will be defeated. It used to be said that "a successful surgeon must have the heart of a lion and the hand of a lady." The same is true of this sort of work. If the order is reversed, the lion may roar in vain, while his intended prey scampers off into the woods. "*He that winneth souls is wise.*" When Jesus accused a guilty crowd with adultery he did not even look them square in the face, but wrote in the sand while they filed out of the temple—the oldest first and the youngest last ; an order and degree of guilt which obtains to this day !!



CHAPTER XVII.

AN ALL-DAY MEETING—A BUSINESS MAN'S STAND-
POINT—A DRESS-PARADE—EXPERIENCES OF
C—, J—, AND WM. H—, AND FAMILY—
MRS. FRAME'S REVIVAL.

Special features characterize all the revivals in which Bro. Bitler labors. When it becomes necessary to vary the programme, either to sustain or increase the general interest, something is devised that will enlist the church or awaken the community afresh. At Circleville, Friday, Feb. 27, was devoted to an all-day meeting. Previously announced as a day of fasting and prayer, the services began at the church at 10 a. m. and continued without recess till 3 o'clock. Each hour the bell was rung and the order of exercises varied. The first was devoted to prayer. The second to responsive Bible reading. The third hour was devoted to consecration for service, and the workers crowded to the front and bowed as near the altar as they could get. The fourth hour was devoted to the theme of scriptural holiness and led by

the pastor. The last hour was something of a culmination of all these features in testimony, prayer, and requests for prayer. Parents presented their children, and relatives and friends spoke of dear ones amid tears and sobs; and such a scene of mingled joy and sympathy seldom meets the eye or touches the heart. Attendance increased as the day advanced, and at its close, the audience instead of being worn out, were manifestly happy and jubilant, with expectation of greater things to come. The day was characterized by deep and permanent results. Some who were not quite clear in their experience were definitely blessed, and others experienced the blessing of a clean heart and were filled with the Holy Spirit. In the mass of conversions attending the onward march of a great revival, there are always cases that are but slightly healed, and an occasional service, devoted more especially to the church, and partaking less of the noise and rush of the regular battle, is best calculated to bring them out into a definite experience. Besides, there are always a mass of hungry people that cannot be fully fed when the whole trend of a meeting deals with the first principles of repentance towards God and incipient faith in Christ. They have laid the foundation and learned the first principles of

the doctrine of Christ again and again, and they long to be filled. A meeting that does not, in some degree, afford facilities for believers to seek and receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost as a special gift of God, is sure to lack one of the most prominent features of apostolic revivals. We should tremble for the safety of the mass of converts, if chosen agents to secure their conversion, were not at the same time lifted to a higher plane of experience by some special anointing of the Holy Ghost that would abide with them when the meetings are closed. If the hungry hearts in the church were fed and filled, a perpetual revival spirit would as surely prevail, as that day lasts while the sun shines.

The following article, published in the *Western Christian Advocate*, affords a glimpse at the usual night meetings and their attendant results from

A BUSINESS MAN'S STAND-POINT.

To the Editor of the Western Christian Advocate :

The writer being in Circleville on Wednesday (the 28th ultimo) was invited by an old parishioner (Jas. Clark) to spend the night with him, and go to the revival meeting at the Methodist Episcopal Church. At 7 o'clock p. m. the church was crowded—seats being placed against the wall and chairs in the aisles—and even the standing room was all occupied. On Tuesday night 25 were converted, and on Wednesday

18. The exercises are conducted by Rev. J. S. Bitler, assisted by the pastor. The singing is vigorous and harmonious, and is given with the spirit and the understanding. The doxology is sung whenever a conversion is announced, and during our evening's visit it must have been sung twenty-five times. The eighteen who professed a change of heart were brought within the chancel at 10 o'clock p. m., as the exercises and instructions for penitents take place in the basement after the invitation is given to seekers of religion. Brother Bitler announced the number and proposed they sing the doxology, which being sung, he asked all who could possibly do so to come and shake hands with those just converted. While hundreds were thus engaged the vast audience sang—

“When the general roll is called,
I'll be there.”

Nearly every person who could sing sang this hymn; and while there was little or no noise, save the singing, there was a general jubilee. There was no seeming frivolity manifested by any one, but on the contrary, all seemed in earnest; among whom were found the rich and poor, the learned and the ignorant, from the very worst as well as from the very best society in the city. Brief experiences being called for, one of the recently converted men, who was known as the most profane character in the city, said: “The Lord has blessed me, and I am the happiest man in town. Some people say there is nothing in this religion; but I say there is, there's millions in it.” The effect was

electrical, as all had confidence in the man, and the doxology was again sung. The revival is the talk at the hotels, in the stores, and on the streets. A large placard stretched across the main street, announces revival services at the Methodist Episcopal Church. Gamblers are reclaimed, drunkards are reformed, and prostitutes are gathered into the fold of the Church, as taught by the words and example of the Great Teacher. Let the time never come in the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church, when one is too low, too vile or too poor to be received into the Church, when fighting temptation to reach a better life. This is the work the Church is intended to do.

GEO. PARROTT.

A "DRESS PARADE."

The happy faculty of getting everybody to do something, and of making young converts conspicuous, especially if they have heretofore been prominent in the service of the devil, is one of Bro. Bitler's elements of success. Up to March 2, about three hundred had been converted. Though remarkable cases had all along been coming to the front, it was thought that by this time a sufficient amount of this sort of material had accumulated for a "*Dress Parade.*" Dear reader, don't be alarmed. We mean just what we say. A regular *exhibition* of what God had been doing, was the outcome of it; though

we do not affirm that to have been the end sought. It was rather intended as a means of noising abroad the gracious results of the revival. The meeting was announced for young men, at the Colosseum. Admission was general, and as a matter of course, older men were there that might have stayed at home if it had not been announced for *young* men. Seated on the stage, and scattered through the audience, were the trophies to be exhibited. They were, some of them, just previously notified that a brief account of what they had been, and what they had been saved from, was expected from the stage. One by one they took the floor, and to an eager audience described the "pit from whence they were digged," and the rock on which they stood. We have never witnessed such an array. The interest of personal history was blended with the wonders of grace, and the naturalness and pathos with which their story was told, moved every heart and melted every eye. The order in which these recitals were given is forgotten, and it may be that we have not preserved much of that which was most thrilling. We give below, the experience of some of our young men, and it will correspond as largely as may be to the testimonies of that day. The report of the meeting by the *Daily Herald* says—

“At 3 P. M. the Colosseum was filled with young men who listened attentively to the thrilling experience of those who but recently gave themselves to God. Among these witnesses were several married men whose narration of what their home life was, and of what it now is, caused the tears to glisten in all eyes.

“The remarks of Mr. C——, J——, were peculiarly interesting, and revealed not only the fact that he had been a great sinner and had received a great Savior, but also that there is a good deal of oratorical fire in the young man, and that a bright future awaits him if he will apply himself in securing an education.

“Considering the fact that all were but ‘babes in Christ,’ they did exceedingly well. Their testimony was clearly given and will doubtless do great good.”

We give these experiences in our own terms, and supplemented by facts since gathered.

C— J—., though but twenty-two years of age, and born and raised in the city of Circleville, had not been inside of a church for fourteen years. Two ignoble exceptions occurred. Once he attended the colored church to make sport of the preacher; and once he entered a crowded church in the country, where, in company with evil companions, he engaged in a brief game of

cards, being almost hid from view by the dense throng that stood in front of them. When about sixteen years of age he began a wild career that earned for him the reputation of being the most abandoned young man in town. He went by the name of "*Scratch*," and descended to such depths that very few persons had any anticipation of his future, except that he would end in the penitentiary. His particular sins need not be mentioned, except to say that he seemed to abandon himself to the extent of his ability. He would not work, and it was his boast that he wanted nothing but whisky, and he was not fool enough to work for whisky money. He was the tool of politicians and gamblers, enjoyed a fight, and could easily swindle his way through on small rations and plenty of liquor. At eighteen years of age he began to work on the railroad, and in the course of time received several recommendations. They ran about thus: "First-class switchman, but can't be depended on—*whisky!*" While in the employ of the S. V. R. R., at the yards in Columbus, he lay down on the track and went to sleep. An engine knocked him from the track and cut off three fingers of his left hand. A comrade gave him a bottle of whisky out of sympathy for his condition (?)

which he duly drank, and got as drunk as he could well be immediately. Three times he took an oath to quit drinking in order to secure a place, but broke each of them forthwith. With the whole trend of his life in the wrong direction, his strong physical and mental powers neglected and abused, and under no restraint whatever, it is marvelous that he escaped utter destruction. On going to the theatre one night he paused at the door to look in, and the small audience disappointed his hope of having a good time. While hesitating he heard them singing "There is a fountain filled with blood," just a square away at the Methodist church. Having heard of the revival, he concluded that that would be the cheapest show, and so went to the church. The writer was speaking when he entered, and happening to narrate an incident that arrested his attention he became interested, and before the service concluded he was set to thinking. A brother in the church went to him and urged him to seek the Lord, which he promised to do, but without the slightest intention of fulfilling the promise. However, the invitation was not lost. On retiring that night he could not sleep. Though he had nothing to lose, he "felt that he had lost something," and the night was spent in rolling

about and cursing his mother "for not making up the bed better." It was a horrible night, and she attributed his ill temper to bad whisky; but he had gone to bed sober, and the trouble had another cause. The next evening he went to the church again, and when the opportunity was offered he stood up for prayers. Very soon after he threw his cap in a corner and started for the altar, and there the struggle began. He says, "the first thing I was willing to quit was whisky. The next thing I was willing to quit, was swindling people out of their money. The last man I let down was an enemy. I had sworn to kill him, and I was willing to serve a term in the penitentiary or put out my tongue for some sheriff, to get even with him, and I was about fifteen minutes trying to make up my mind to let him go." However, the victory was gained and Christ accepted, and, to use his own language, "I felt a great change come over me. I felt happy and light, and felt like laughing and shaking hands with my worst enemy." The next morning an opportunity was afforded him, and on meeting his former enemy he shook hands with him, and told of his conversion. On hearing this the young man replied that if that was settled he would now take his revolver out of his pocket and put it in his

trunk. Here ended what might have been a tragedy, but, by the blessing of God, became a reconciliation.

This young man's conversion was of such a startling nature that it moved the whole community, and as he took right hold of the work and became efficient in leading others to Christ, he was given many opportunities to speak in public and exercise his gifts, which, if properly trained and controlled, would make him a useful and successful man. Nothing but divine grace could have wrought the change, and the same great grace can consummate the transformation.

The case of Wm. H——, in view of its sequel, was one of the most remarkable of any that attended the revival. He was an associate of the young man whose experience is referred to above. Not so abandoned, but intemperate, profane, and, when intoxicated, quarrelsome. Once, in company with J., he spent sixty-three days in the county jail for assault and battery. This embroglio commenced over a few cents' worth of candy, and when the trouble began he sailed in to assist his friend J., and the two together brutally whipped their opponents, and were severely punished by their confinement. Like the former, he had worked on the railroad, and met with a terrible affliction in the loss of a

limb. This came near ending his life; and at one time, when he supposed the end was near, he expressed a desire to see a minister, and told his mother that if God spared his life he would try to be a better man. The minister was not sent for however, lest the excitement of a pastoral visit might prove fatal to the patient. When he was recovered, instead of keeping his promise, he spent the next two years in sin and folly, and grew worse instead of better. He was not in the habit of going to church, and had seldom been present for five years past. When the revival was in progress he received an invitation to go and hear Bro. Bitler. After some time he went, but at first was not seriously impressed, and did not continue to come with any regularity. He became interested in the Young Men's meetings, and it was there that conviction matured into seriousness. He persisted in declining to go to the altar for some time, and the reason assigned, after his conversion, was that he felt embarrassed by the loss of his limb and doubted whether he could kneel as others did. Conviction increased, however, and one day he tried the experiment at home, and found that, though encumbered with an artificial appliance, he could manage to kneel very comfortably. Soon after he came to the altar and was converted.

He then prevailed on his mother to come to the meetings, which she did, and was converted in about a week after. Then three of his sisters followed, and were saved. Last of all, his father, who was sore pressed by all hands at home, "couldn't stand the pressure any longer," and consented to come to the church.

The night after Wm. was converted his mother suggested that christians had family prayers and asked a blessing at the table, and the young convert proceeded forthwith to attend to these duties. This he continued to do until re-inforced by others of the family, who took their turn as fast as they were converted. Thus the old gentleman was living in a christian family, and beset with prayers and entreaties from all sides. He had once been very intemperate, but during a revival held in Circleville, in 1877, under Mrs. Frame, *an evangelist*, he reformed. Though scarcely ever at any church during the intervening period of eight years, except on the occasion of a funeral, his reformation proved to be permanent. When at last he was induced to come, the Holy Spirit took hold of him mightily, and he was soon converted. He then took the lead in religious service at home, and the whole family are living in the experience of salvation.

The revival referred to above, conducted by

Mrs. Frame, under the Pastorate of Rev. Jas. Mitchell, we have often heard disparaged. It has been asserted that scarcely any fruit remained, and that the revival did no permanent good. The charge is false. That great revival never died. Precious fruit remains to this day, as the church records will show. Ignorance or carelessness may assert the contrary, but we aver that since our pastorate began in this charge, instances of conversion, and cases of reformation, that date from that meeting, have been constantly coming to light. Moreover, the revival conducted by Mrs. Frame was frequently referred to in our recent meetings, and names were added to the church that had been converted then. Not simply backsliders, but persons who had lived consistent christians ever since. It was a genuine work of God. It added to the church, and strengthened it in every respect, and the defections were no more, proportionately, than the average number that fall away, after revivals conducted by the regular pastors. The church record indicates this, and a thorough knowledge of the field puts it beyond question. If to the actual fruit of that revival, be added the numbers that were reached in consequence of it, by this revival, it will be regarded as a splendid soul saving work of grace.

CHAPTER XVIII.

NO BACKING—EXPERIENCE OF GEO. S——,—TELE- GRAPH OPERATORS—NO MORE SPREES.

We venture a continuation of personal experiences, well aware that, in view of the fact that these converts are of so recent date, we may meet the objection that such publication is premature. Their term of *probation* in the church has but scarcely expired, and they *may* fall. But we are sure that readers of this volume have not yet come to the end of a probation that ensures them against falling; and if we must submit to their criticism we will try to bear it gracefully.

Whatever the subsequent history of any in this record, their salvation thus far serves to illustrate the work of the Holy Spirit. Adam fell, David fell, Solomon fell, Peter fell. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." If, however, we are to wait till we know certainly who will be finally saved, we must defer revival accounts till we meet the recording angel. Indeed, we suppose it possible, to discover conservative theologians who would forbid a convert's

name on the Lamb's Book of Life, till an absolute fore-knowledge endorsed his calling and election as eternally sure. We are not of that school. We prefer the arminian chances or rather contingencies ; and if we *must* take either alternative, of a Book of Life written and sealed before the foundation of the world with every name stereotyped beyond erasure, or the extreme of Divine Nescience, we prefer the latter. Whatever awaits us we can *now* sing

Yes, my name's written there,
On the page white and fair ;
In the Book of thy Kingdom
Yes, my name's written there.

Some people are always waiting for something to drop, and on the first rumor are ready to say "I told you so ;" when if they had manifested more faith and less suspicion, they might have been useful in preventing it. It has been our experience that at the close of revivals, just as the regular prayer meeting gets fairly under way, somebody gives the clue and away go the prayers after the young converts that are "going back." We learned long ago to stop that sort of backing right at the start. We insist that a prayer-meeting that takes up the mournful monody of backsliding converts, is a curse, both to the older members and the struggling beginners, that are

obliged to hear the *dead march* every time they come to the house of God. The first attempt to put the prayer-meeting flag at half-mast ought to be kindly admonished, and later attempts deserve to be dealt with as a species of treason. Unless the petitioner is able to name the persons meant, and willing to serve as a committee to hunt them up, he has no right to vend his complaint in the public prayer-meeting. If kindly admonitions will not secure acquiescence to this measure, let the test be applied, and it will very soon disappear from the programme. The fact is, a large number of christians assume a regular stampede after the revival, and then seek to ease their consciences for not doing something to prevent it, by unloading at the prayer-meeting. Let converts stand committed by profession, and, after a reasonable probation, even in print; and let the church stand committed to them. Their chances of success are then made a hundred fold more probable. If, after all that can be done, any are found willing to cancel their charter of eternal life, erase their names, and let the dead bury their dead, while we go marching on.

Geo. S——, was a man of quick temper and strong impulses, but withal of a generous turn, and many excellent qualities. He was a carriage manufacturer, and by hard work and good man-

agement he had built up a large trade in a very few years. He carried his industry over the six days allotted for business, and usually spent the Sabbath in riding about the country in quest of work, and having "a good time." The habit of drinking, which he had indulged for about three years, was becoming a costly luxury, and not only so, but it had been growing on him during the last half of that time to such an extent that it was rapidly getting the best of him. His chief sin however, was profanity. His temper was almost beyond control, and when enraged he swore at everything and everybody. He enjoyed the unenviable reputation of being the most profane man in town. Nobody wanted to swear like S——, and it was the better part of wisdom to keep out of range when he was provoked to pour out his invectives of wrath. During the revival his younger brother—a telegraph operator—was converted, and shortly after, at an evening meeting, Bro. Bitler called the young man to the platform to narrate his experience. This was in keeping with the evangelist's method of "noising it abroad" and keeping every trophy visible. The young convert mounted the platform, and not only told his blissful experience, but in referring to his companions and their habits, he gave some offence. It was quite a lengthy speech

for a novice, and he closed up with an exhortation that some of his former companions did not accept with the best grace. Taking advantage of some of his statements, a rival operator attacked him through the columns of a daily paper; and this unfortunate occurrence made even the evangelist sorry that he had thus inadvertently subjected the young man to so great an annoyance. We feared for his safety, but were rejoiced to find that he had the grace of endurance. That very night, however, G——, S——, was present, and the speech of his younger brother was reaching his heart with an eloquence that made him weep like a child. It was just the sermon for him and he went away convicted. His convictions grew more intense, and a few evenings after he came to the service at a late hour, but when urged to seek Christ he thought of his old friends and customers, many of whom were irreligious, and concluded that he could not get along in business and be a christian. His wife was a devoted christian and regularly knelt in prayer before retiring, and that night he surprised and rejoiced her by kneeling at her side. He spent a sleepless night, however. The next day he failed to attend the meetings, but the Spirit of God was pressing him hard, and at night he again knelt beside his wife in prayer. Conviction increased,

and he finally concluded to go to the afternoon meeting and ask for prayers, and follow that step by going to the altar at night. Going to the shop, he gave the boys their time to attend the meeting, and started for the church. Meanwhile, the enemy was at work. His christian wife and mother had been informed that he was about to go to the church under the influence of liquor, and hastening toward the shop they met him on the way, and upset all his good resolutions by urging him to return, which he did. To give vent to the storm that was brewing, he went to work again. Meanwhile his temper got the best of him, and thus foiled, disappointed and enraged, he gave them an exhibition of it. Just then, a stranger, who lived in the country, came in to see about some repairs. He proved to be a man of God, and very soon began to reprove S——, and to point him to the Savior. Poor S——, then told of his recent determinations, and the stranger urged him to seek Christ right there. He told him he could find salvation in his shop. S——, replied that he *wouldn't be converted in his shop*, and that night declined to kneel again as before. But the Spirit of God was urging the surrender, and he began at last to think that his shop would be the proper place for him to give his heart to God. He spent the next day in

praying most of the time, and in response to a brother who called to urge him to seek the Lord, he said he would, and returned a polite note requesting Bro. Bitler to bring a few christians with him and pray for him there.

When they went they found him ready to yield. Only one thing stood in his way. His hatred for a relative that was specially obnoxious to him was so great that he was unwilling to forgive. At last, however, he yielded the point, and while kneeling with these christian friends his load was lifted and he was clearly converted to God. Anger, wrath, malice, and the whole catalogue of these fruits, gave way to peace and love, and the next day the pleasure of meeting the former object of his hatred was a new luxury that he had not dreamed of before. He went immediately home and there erected a family altar, and came to the church at night to tell what God had done for him, and of the happiest home in all the country.

N—— S——, the young man referred to above, was one of six telegraph operators converted at this meeting. While Bro. Bitler was at Gallipolis, several messages passed between him and the writer, and N. chanced to send and receive some of them. One urged Bro. Bitler to come to Circleville, "now or never."

Another wound up with "glory to God." N. made some trifling remark to the operator at the other end of the line, who replied by telling him that he needed a little of it himself. Soon a telegram came saying that 527 had been converted, and the meeting still growing. The ejaculations that followed this statement will hardly bear reporting, but N. made up his mind that if Bitler came he would go and hear him. When he came to the church the convicting Spirit took hold on him as soon as he entered the door, and in a few days he surrendered to God and was soundly converted.

Curiosity, doubtless, was the primary motive that led him to the house of God, but if the numbers who attend divine service were confined to those that come from pious motives, we would preach to small congregations. If *noising abroad* the results of revival would excite the curiosity of telegraph operators, and secure their attention to the claims of the gospel, it would pay to keep them busy reporting revival news.

J. A. C——., when but twelve years of age, began work in a bowling-alley, which was connected with a saloon. For a period of perhaps fifteen years he was in the employ of some saloon, and during that time the habit of drinking was frequently getting the best of him. Re-

peated efforts to reform made his life a struggle, and he would sometimes straighten up and abstain for so long a time that he would congratulate himself on having gained the victory. But the saloon element were his associates, and sometimes, after declining a hundred invitations to drink, he would break down and fall to the same depths as before. These sprees would last from one to four weeks, or as long as his money held out, and he could manage to borrow or get credit. Not of a vicious temperament, but naturally kind and considerate, his wages ranging from seven to twelve dollars per week, he could have supported his family easily. But these frequent sprees made it a precarious matter. Though his excellent wife continued to plead, and dying words of a little son were fresh in his memory, all was of no avail. From the time that his little boy died, and during the two years that followed, he had no rest of mind, and would often look at the church, while passing, and wish that he was a christian. But he did not reform, and about the beginning of the revival he was drinking hard, got into trouble, and was locked up in the station-house. When released, he told a friend that helped him out, that he was going to join the church and be a christian on the first opportunity. He came to the

meetings under conviction. Sought and found salvation. Brought happiness to his wife and four little children. Broke the spell of demon drink, and has "lived in all good conscience" until this day. Good sense, rare mental ability, industry, and, above all, *the grace of God*, is doing wonders for him.



CHAPTER XIX.

OTHER DENOMINATIONS—EFFECTS ON THE COMMUNITY—TOO MANY CHURCHES!—CONVERSION OF A DEAF MUTE—TRIUMPHANT DEATH OF THE FIRST CONVERT—ANOTHER SAFE.

It is worthy of remark that the various evangelical denominations of the city treated the revival with uniform favor, and some of them gathered fruit that was to some extent the product of this meeting. We do not mean this remark to be construed in any sense discreditable to them. For, during the progress of the meeting, it was frequently urged by the pastor that persons converted here should unite with any of the churches deemed preferable. To what extent this advice was taken we are not informed. Perhaps we received as many persons from sister churches as they did from us. Quite a number, whose former affiliations were with them, were either converted, reclaimed, or so thoroughly baptized into Methodist usages and Methodist spirit, that they

afterward united with us, either on probation or by letter.

So far as we know none of them were solicited or invited to do so; nevertheless they were cordially received. Several of the churches drank deeply of the spirit of the revival, and either protracted their meetings, or began services again, after having rested from special meetings previously held. The spirit of awakening pervaded the entire city, and instead of indulging a spirit of criticism, we felt that the times were propitious for all the churches to save souls, and if they had not made some effort to utilize these favorable conditions, we doubt whether they would have been free from the guilt of neglect. At least fifty, perhaps twice as many, united with the different denominations as a result of these extra meetings.

The general spirit of revival, and the amount of public interest awakened, is indicated by the fact that there were *four* churches holding meetings day and night as the second series of the winter, and all of them were well attended. Churches in the adjacent country caught the flame and were making the second effort at revival; and in some instances the last was more fruitful of results than the first.

Not only were religious people effected, but

there was a very perceptible falling off in all that contributes to the liquor traffic. Customers were less numerous, beer kegs were less prominent, and even inmates of houses of ill-fame complained that "unless the revival was stopped they would starve to death."

A "drummer," whose stock consisted of fine wines and other liquors, paid the city a visit about this time, and returning to Columbus, O., he reported his success to the lady with whom he was boarding.

He said that Circleville was the worst town he had ever struck. "They have so many churches there. There are churches in other towns, to be sure, but they seem to have such a hold on the people. When you ask if they want anything, they just look at you. I didn't make my expenses, &c." He assured his land-lady that he would never visit the town again; but possibly, under the reign of "free whisky," and no law that liquor men are bound to respect, he may be induced to come at a later period and "try his luck again."

Among those converted at the meetings were at least five persons that had formerly been engaged in the sale of liquor. They were not all of them regular saloon keepers, but they are regular attendants on the various services of the

church, and we could wish that all the converts of revival meetings were as uniformly full of faith and zeal.

DEAF MUTE.

Standing on the platform one evening, and just before the meeting in the inquiry room had adjourned to come up stairs, we noticed a young man passing in front of the pulpit, whose smiling face indicated a perfect rapture. Such an expression of mingled astonishment and delight we had never seen. The impression was at once made that the young man had just been converted. We followed him to his seat in the audience, and inquired if it were not so. The answer was nothing but a look, and a smile. Repeating the question, he said nothing, but seemed greatly excited and very happy. We left him not knowing what to make of it. Presently we went to him again, and insisted on knowing what was the matter. After some time he seemed to understand what was wanted, and first putting his hand on his heart he lifted it up, as much as to say that something sacred had transpired between him and God. When we discovered that he was deaf, the matter was made plain; but how he came to get enough gospel to go to the altar and seek and find the Savior, is still a mystery. He had learned

the carpenter's trade, was an intelligent and excellent workman, and withal, his infirmity had not been a complete defense against evil associations and some bad habits. Before his conversion he was cross and peevish in the family, and there was plenty of room for reformation. Since that time he has attended faithfully all the services of the church, and testified at almost every opportunity—by the same sign of laying his hand on his heart and then lifting it above his head. His temper has sweetened, and his whole demeanor is that of a happy, consistent christian. If "by their fruits" we are to know them, then the Holy Spirit has done a great work in the heart of Bro. Wm. F——.

Multitudes of cases worthy of record must be passed by without notice. Of all that have been given, not one is recorded here that has not given every evidence of genuine transformation, and subsequent faithfulness. Should any of them fall we may regret the publication of their experiences, but we venture our faith in their fidelity, and noise abroad the grace that saved them, knowing that they will be "kept by the power of God, through faith, unto everlasting life," unless they abandon the Savior by a criminal desertion.

We have often remarked that revival efforts are usually followed, or attended, by two very

different phases of death. In calling to mind former revivals we find no exception to this statement, and we could verify it by marked instances in almost every case. Indeed it is no matter of wonder in view of the multitudes that usually attend revival meetings, some of whom accept the Savior, and others, under deep conviction persistently reject salvation for the last time. It very frequently occurs that converts are translated while yet in the joy of their "first love," and others, who have rejected Christ, die in darkness, "having no hope and without God."

An instance of the latter, almost parallel to many we have known, occurred during the meetings here. Prior to the coming of Bro. Bitler, a woman whose hostility to the church was evinced by her repeated utterances, was visited by kind friends and neighbors who urged her to come to the meetings. She persistently refused, and on learning that the evangelist was expected, she declared that she would like to see him; she was going to hell anyway, and she wanted to give him a piece of her mind before she went. Shortly after his coming, at a time when the meetings were at their best stage, a brother, whom we prefer not to name, while exhorting the people quoted the text, "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be

destroyed, and that without remedy." He not only urged it with vehemence, but went so far as to assert a powerful impression that it was soon to be verified in our midst. The next day, the woman referred to above, fell from her chair—dead. It created something of an impression at the time, and the remarks of the evening before were brought vividly to mind.

We tried to preach a faithful sermon to the large company assembled at the house, from the text, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." The occasion and its impressions were not lost, for very soon after some of the hearers were among the seekers and found the Savior.

DEATH OF THE FIRST CONVERT.

Very different was the case of Carrie M——. At the first meeting of the series she yielded to an invitation to give her heart to Christ and began at once to seek him. For some time she was in great distress of mind. In a few days she was taken sick and deprived of the privilege of attending the services. She seemed for a time to vacillate between light and darkness, but soon received the witness of her acceptance, and began to be greatly concerned for others. When her illness became serious she spent

most of her time praying for the salvation of others, and would not rest until she seemed assured of their conversion. After that, glory! glory! glory! were her frequent exclamations. When the end drew near she called the family to her bedside and talked as one looking into Heaven. The gates, she said, were open. Jesus was visible. Angelic hosts were above and about her. Called to her bedside just before the light went out, the last words we could distinctly hear were, "trusting Jesus." Though but fifteen years of age, her repentance was attended with genuine grief, her conversion marked and clear, and her death triumphant. We devoted a regular hour of service to the funeral at the church, and made it a part of the programme of the meetings to exhibit her triumph among the results of the revival.

Later on, and after the close of the meetings, another young lady who had been converted during the revival was taken suddenly ill and died. Not, however, until she had left a clear testimony that all was well. Strongly tempted to stay away from the "Band" meeting one Tuesday night, she passed the church three times debating the question. But finally she went in. The meeting proved to be one most precious to her soul, and she testified to an *evi-*

dence of her acceptance with God with more emphasis than usual for her. That night she was very ill, and in a few days was dead—but numbered among those who “die in the Lord.” Doubtless every pastor can call to mind similar cases whose conversion and death came so near together, that we not only saw them saved, but *safe*. We know that our ministry is not barren, and heaven is sweeter when we have children there.

With two converts in heaven, and hundreds on the way thither, the real record of this great revival will only be known when the last of them has ended the race and received the crown of everlasting life.



CHAPTER XX.

DAY OF JUBILEE.

INVITATIONS—PRAISE SERVICE—SERMON—AFTER-
NOON SESSION—RESPONSES—REPORTS FROM VIS-
ITING MINISTERS—CLOSING ADDRESS BY DR.
TRIMBLE—A PENTECOST AT NIGHT—FRUITS OF
THE JUBILEE ; AND CLOSING SERVICE OF THE
REVIVAL.

Friday, March 20, 1885, was a memorable day in the history of Circleville. Nearly a thousand cards of invitation had been addressed to ministers and others, and they served not only as invitations, but to noise abroad the work of grace. The day announced for the jubilee proved to be a stormy one, and with the thermometer down to a low degree, many were deterred from coming. Nevertheless, a large number came by train, and from the surrounding country, and ministerial brethren were well represented. Some of the latter were engaged in revivals, but had left the battle in the hands of their people and come to the jubilee for its inspiration. The Colosseum is a large frame build-

ing, capable of seating about twelve hundred people, and before the service had proceeded far it was comfortably filled; while at night an overflow meeting was held at the church.

The meeting began with a *praise service*; opened with prayer by Rev. Dr. J. M. Trimble, and consisting of songs of jubilee, and fervent prayers by visiting ministers. The first hour closed with a report from the pastor, in which various features of the work were reviewed, and the sum of all that had been accomplished reported. There had been four hundred and sixty conversions directly, the result of the meeting, and about forty in other churches of the city. So that, making no account of the incidental fruits of the revival in the incentives given to other meetings in the country, we were warranted in rejoicing over the conversion of *five hundred souls*.

SERMON BY REV. S. A. KEEN.

Following the praise service came the sermon of Rev. S. A. Keen, Presiding Elder of the Lancaster District. Having labored most effectively in the meeting during part of the time, and perfectly conversant with all its details, he took hold of the work at the right place.

The text was Zech., 4: 6. "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

A brief outline of the sermon deserves a place here, more especially as it sounds the key-note of genuine evangelistic work. We reproduce it from memory, and we owe the recollection of it to the fact that the truth affirmed profoundly impressed us at the time as of the utmost importance to all religious workers. He began by saying that

THERE ARE TWO METHODS OF WORK.—The one always results in failure; the other always insures success. The *first* uses all the natural and providential resources of the church, and depends on them. The *second* uses the same natural and providential means, and depends on the Holy Spirit. The result is, that the first fails to accomplish anything, and the second succeeds. The *case of Asa* was used in illustration of this difference. Asa's capital was threatened by Zerah. Asa marshaled his forces, called upon God, and won a glorious victory. We might suppose that this method of warfare would have been continued; but when another emergency came, and shortly after this Baasha, King of Israel, threatened Jerusalem, Asa made alliance with Benhadad, King of Syria; depended on his army, did not call on God, and ignominiously failed. The *resources of the church*, consisting in architecture, an educated ministry, Sunday School appliances, etc., are invaluable. But to use them and depend on them is to fail; while to use them and depend on God is to succeed. They are great, but not great enough to be depended on. They are of God, but if we base our faith on their efficiency, we are sure to fail in the end. If we use

them, and supplement our work by judicious methods, depending solely on the Holy Spirit, we are sure to succeed. The second part of the sermon raised the question,

WHAT CAN WE DEPEND ON THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR? First, in reply, we can depend on Him for *convicting power*. In proof, we have the promise that "He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." Second, for *converting power*. There are times in a revival when the work of conversion seems to lag. Souls at the altar of prayer, but none being converted. Then, frequently, every other dependence fails and we are driven to depend on Him alone, when Lo! the power of God comes suddenly upon them and they are converted, and the work goes on.

Third, for *revival power*. Such power as controls the attention of a community; sets them to thinking and talking about religion. Politics is laid aside. Business becomes secondary. The spirit of a general awakening is seen and felt, and times of refreshing come to the church of God. We must come to recognize the fact that the Holy Spirit is the great, and the *only* great, Revivalist.

FINALLY, WHY MAY WE DEPEND ON THE HOLY SPIRIT?

First—*Because he came to do this work*. He has nothing else in hand at this time. Creation was finished long ago. The worlds are made. "He garnished the heavens," and His work in that sphere has been consummated. The work of inditing and inspiring a revelation is completed. The

bible is made. The atoning work of redemption is finished. All things are now ready, and the Holy Spirit has nothing else to do.

Second—*He is able to do all things.* Nothing is too hard for him.

Third—*He is ready.* We have but to ask him. "More willing to give good things to them that ask." &c. (Luke xi., 13). If we succeed in the work of God we must depend on God. May we learn the lesson that it is "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

We refrain from any estimate of the sermon as to its merit or acceptability, and only produce the above sketch to give prominence, and if possible emphasis, to its evangelistic trend. No mind can magnify the importance of entire dependence on the Holy Spirit. Our acquaintance with Bro. Bitler's meetings and unique methods, has not lessened our appreciation of this truth, but greatly increased it; and if the reader by observing in this account the various combinations of machinery and method, has lost sight of the cloud that covered and the glory that filled the temple, he has been strangely misled. In many cases we could cite, brethren from abroad came to our meeting who were as conscious of a divine presence before they witnessed the *apparent* results as afterward. Many persons who were spiritually susceptible, entered our meetings

under such a sense of the power of the Holy Ghost that it was indeed an "inward persuasion," a sacred assurance, and a feeling akin to that which Moses must have had when he stood by the burning bush.

A man of God whose ministry covers a period of many years in the Ohio Conference, and whose intense love for the practical and experimental, has made him familiar with all the branches of natural philosophy; whose sensibilities are not moved by the ordinarily emotional, and whose intellectual standards of taste have made him to be regarded as a severe critic, volunteered this testimony to the writer; "I could not be any more conscious of the presence of the Holy Spirit. As I come near the church I realize it. If the atmosphere was colored with some substance it would not render the fact any more apparent to my *sensorium commune*, than it is."

Said a layman, who came from a distance, and whom we met a few minutes after he was seated in the congregation; "I knew the Holy Spirit was here as soon as I entered the door." Numerous testimonies might be given in addition to these; and as Dr. Trimble said in his address, cited later in this account, "anybody could see that God is here."

The sermon quoted above needed no exhorta-

tion such as we have seen fit to append. The people that heard it had ample proof of its truthfulness. A consecration service followed. Ten persons rose for prayers, and several came forward and were converted.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

This meeting was introduced by prayer and song, the ministers present being called on to pray. Responses, of which a large number were received, were then read by the pastor.

An hour or more was devoted to *reports from visiting ministers*. This part of the programme was in keeping with Bro. Bitler's method of keeping revival results at the front, and noising abroad everything relating to the work of God. No minister ever comes into the congregation with good news in his heart, that does not have an opportunity to declare it. On this occasion the preachers were fresh from the field and flush with victory, and their testimonies celebrated the triumphs of more than a hundred battles.

The Lancaster District was first reported. The District comprises a large part of four counties and a small part of two others, and the revival had been general. Of twenty-one charges, all had been blessed with marked revivals except three. Of seventy-five societies, sixty-five had revivals.

The spirit of awakening had been intense. The meetings were characterized by powerful convictions, and clear conversions; while the churches had been elevated to a higher plane of christian experience. It was specially emphasized that the spirit of this meeting at Circleville had spread, and incited the preachers and people all over the District. In places where revivals had closed the pastors had renewed the battle, and were now having greater victories than at first. The number of conversions was reported at nineteen hundred since the first of January, 1885. The whole number, since reported, has reached 2,500.

Other preachers, of the district and elsewhere, took up the work in detail; and he is a cold preacher who could have heard the story of so many battles without having his soul stirred. It was like the prelibation of coming millennium.

We have read the accounts of early Methodist victories, and longed to see the like in modern times, and right here the story was being repeated, amid the tears and hallelujahs of a multitude. When Methodist preachers get together, and recount their experiences of conquest and victory, if the hearer has any war metal in him, it is sure to ring when the key is struck.

Rev. Z. W. Fagan, Presiding Elder of the

Gallipolis District came in with the "cap sheaf," and reported the great revival at Gallipolis, and the work in general on that district. The sum of it he described as wonderful! wonderful!! wonderful!!! Of twenty-three charges, twenty had been blessed with revivals, and the whole number of converts in the district had reached twenty-three hundred, and in many places the work still going on.* His account of the revival at Gallipolis, together with marked manifestations of the same power throughout the district, fully justified the oft repeated "*wonderful*" of his characteristic speech. "'Tis wonderful grace," was never sung with more heartfelt gladness than at the close of his remarks.

The prevailing sentiment was that of thanksgiving, and while the jubilee was held in honor of the fact that 500 souls had been converted at Circleville, it took on the broader cast of celebrating the triumphs of more than a hundred revivals. The closing address was made by *Rev. Dr. J. M. Trimble*.

Without attempting to report it in full, we may recall some of its allusions as eminently appropriate to this account. It was worth much to hear it, and more to feel it, for it was in many

* Our latest report from Bro. Fagan puts the number at 2,651.

respects the climax of a wonderful meeting. He began by saying that while something of a stickler for Methodist hymns, he could often express himself in the language of another, viz.: I'm glad I'm in this army." His former labors, extending through many years, and many revivals, were briefly referred to. The great revival at Circleville in 1842, under the pastorate of Rev. Bon-tique, in which 400 were converted, and another in 1857 under the 'pastorate of Dr. Cyrus Fel-ton, in which 350 were brought in, both occurred at the time when he was Presiding Elder, and in which he labored. He said that this was the same spirit that prevailed in those great revivals; that *anybody could see that God is here*; that God is in this movement as he was in that years ago. He stated that he had been converted 58 years ago, that he had been in the ministry 57 years; the first year 500 souls were converted. The fruit of later revivals he had found everywhere. They were scattered through the years, and over a wide district, and even in the congregation before him. Pointing to the writer he said, "I prayed with the father of this pastor." (He might have added that *Joseph H. Creighton* first went to the altar of prayer at Circleville in 1842, while Dr. Trimble was preaching. The former referred to this fact at the session of the Conference recently

convened here, and declared that in later years he had heard many sermons, but none that stormed his heart as that one did.) In referring to the question that had been raised, asking why our church had no quarrels on the subject of doctrines, he replied, that we had no time for that, we were a *revival church*, and when we ceased to be that, we were nothing. His reference to the present revival, associated as it was with past labors and precious memories, was so eminently fitting that it seemed to bind the fathers and the children together, and blend the whole vast revival spirit into one, and we felt that we were really in the revivals we had before only read about. Turning to the ministers, his fervent appeals to them to trust in God, and prayer for them that they might be endued with the Holy Spirit, was met with responsive amens, that reflected the same ardent revival spirit. His closing appeal to the unconverted was delivered in the same vein of earnestness and pathos that characterizes his best utterances, and when he had finished, we sang the doxology over the victories of all the past, and in hope of triumphs yet to come.

The closing hour was given to testimonies from laymen present. Mr. S. M. Alderman, an attorney, converted during Bro. Bitler's meeting at Corning, was introduced, and after reciting his

experience, (recorded elsewhere in this volume) he commended the grace of God as able to save from the lowest depths of intemperance. Nothing could have added to the simplicity and candor with which he told the story of his rescue. It thrilled the vast audience, and every body seemed to weep. We have seldom heard a recital so full of pathos, and yet so marked with genuine ability. No speech of that day elicited more friendly comment.

Hon. G. P. Brook, member of the Ohio Legislature, was next to speak, and a worthy speech it was. Learning of this revival he had come to enjoy the jubilee, in the hope that he should find among the 500 converted, the family of a relative residing here. In this he had been disappointed. But, we may add, that while he was here God made him instrumental in their salvation, and he went home with a glad heart and good news.

Eighty persons occupied the remaining moments, and when all that were saved were requested to testify by rising, fully nine-tenths of the vast audience stood up. It was like the tide of a great camp-meeting, and closed the afternoon service.

NIGHT SERVICES.

At night the services were conducted by Rev. Z. W. Fagan, of Gallipolis, and Bro. Bitler. The

Colosseum was crowded to its utmost capacity, and an overflow meeting was held at the church, led by Rev. S. A. Keen and the pastor. The latter meeting was singularly powerful. We never witnessed its equal. The first half dozen prayers were remarkable. The altar was presented as usual ; a few came at first and others followed. Suddenly, as if lifted by the same hand, the "mothers in Israel," began to praise God aloud. Half a score began to shout at once. Those at the altar were converted at the same time. Others were struck with conviction, and the whole congregation were caught in a whirlwind that moved those in front to the rear. Two or three times the congregation seemed to swing clear round, and we doubt if an unconverted person in the house was left without a personal invitation. Some started for the door but were arrested, and one especially, with hat in hand was just about leaving, when he was met by a brother, and at once surrendered and came clear out on the side of the saved. At the close of this wonderful service the news had spread to the Colosseum, and when the larger meeting was dismissed the multitude thronged the church, only to hear of its wonderful manifestations and join in its closing doxologies.

Thus ended a day of jubilee that roused all

the latent forces of this great revival and quickened the faith of thousands.

FRUITS OF THE JUBILEE.

Rev. W. C. Holliday, stationed at Shawnee, Ohio, attended the jubilee and reported a revival, resulting in sixty-two accessions and fifty conversions. The Presiding Elder took occasion to remark that while greater results in numbers were reported from some other places, he regarded this revival, in view of almost insuperable hindrances that had to be met, as one of the most remarkable in the district. The following statement, furnished by the Presiding Elder, contains not only an estimate of the influence of the Circleville meeting in the Lancaster District, but the last Shawnee bulletin :

“ The revival flame at Circleville sent its radiations throughout Lancaster District. In some parts, where effort for revival had been made and no fruit gathered, the news from Circleville so inspirited the pastors and people that they resumed special evangelistic effort and had glorious success. Notably among these incidental effects of the Circleville revival was this instance : Rev. W. C. Holliday, pastor of Shawnee, attended the jubilee service at Circleville. His charge had had a revival in January, but

he was not satisfied with the results ; they were not commensurate with the great spiritual needs, as he justly thought, of that community. While attending the Circleville jubilee the inspiration came to him to begin another series of meetings. He returned home and resumed revival work. Within a few days God providentially sent him the assistance of Mrs. R. E. A. Smith, an evangelist, and soon there were conversions amounting in the aggregate for the year to 345. This second meeting led to a second meeting at New Straitsville, resulting in seventy-five conversions."

THE CLOSING SERVICE

On the night of April 3, 1885, was a fitting culmination of the great revival. As usual, the first half hour was devoted to song. Bro. Bitler followed with a brief address. He closed by thanking those who had contributed to the success of the meetings, including the choir, the *press* of the city, the owner of the Colosseum for its gratuitous use, and others who had been prominent in helping the work. After remarks by the pastor, Bro. Bitler called attention to the fact that the scriptural mottoes had been taken down from the walls, and asked the congregation to recite them in the order in which they had stood. Beginning with the

first, they were repeated in chorus by the congregation, showing that they were retained in memory by the multitude. He then proposed to shake hands with all in the audience that would agree to make it a covenant, signifying that "by God's grace I'll meet you in heaven." Then began a general move from every seat in the room, and as the songs of Zion were sung, one following another, almost the entire audience filed by the pulpit and grasped the hand of the evangelist. The spirit of hand-shaking became prevalent, and the scene presented a phase of rejoicing seldom witnessed. Having begun with great anticipation, we closed with a retrospect, recounting what God had wrought. One soul was converted, and after singing "Marching to Zion," "Sweet By and By," and "The General Roll," the meeting was closed with the Doxology and Benediction,



CHAPTER XXI.

METHODS.

THE STUDY OF METHODS—A KEY TO THE SITUATION—PREACHING NOT AT FAULT—COPYISTS.—QUESTIONABLE METHODS—A “BAD BOX.”

It amounts to little in the record of revival events to declare that they were wonderful. We must know something of their causes, and the attendant means and methods employed to secure them, before we can learn much from a study of them. Many earnest workers are anxious to know *how* it was done by others, that they may be better prepared to do it themselves; and while no man is a model, and no method is either opportune or always successful, the study of men and methods may be suggestive in more ways than one. The success of one man is often a stimulus to many. True, David could not fight in Saul's armor, and it is certain that David's sling would be as useless in the hands of another. Ram's horns and lusty blowing brought down the walls of Jericho, but it is not probable that similar horns would be effective in modern war-

fare. The copyist that would employ Bitler's methods, and attempt to *noise abroad* the work of God, might do a vast amount of "blowing," but it is not probable that the walls would have any trouble to stand. Samson's method with the gates of Gaza, would fit nobody else, unless God should so order. His resources are infinite and He is not obliged to duplicate his plans. The fact therefore, that He did it that way once, is evidence that He will do it some other way again.

The study of methods will be valuable as suggestions, but certainly not as models to be followed or patterns to be adopted. If an evangelist is not blessed with a degree of originality sufficient to improvise methods of his own, he can hardly be in possession of that wisdom that winneth souls. If he be truly called of God to this work, and have the baptism of the Holy Ghost, he is as sure to be a successful evangelist as that God cannot be mistaken. The Holy Spirit will as certainly suggest appropriate methods to an inquiring mind as that the promise of wisdom is true. "If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." It is the testimony of Bro. Bitler on this point that he caught the idea of *advertisement*, which he has since employed with

so good effect, while on his knees. It is characteristic of him that he takes matters of management and plans of work into his closet. When difficulties arise, he pleads with God for *a key to the situation*, and usually he gets it, and the combination is unlocked.

We tread on sacred ground, and lest we give aid and comfort to those who excuse their want of revivals on the score of inadaptability, we hesitate in making what seems to be a concession; Yet the truth remains that God does not call every minister to the same *phase* of soul-saving work; nor does He qualify them for it. "Some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." We have known men who supposed that the baptism of the Holy Spirit would, if received, qualify them for evangelistic work; and that the measure of spiritual power received would be manifested in the specific work of getting sinners converted. Doubtless the natural powers would be quickened, and success in every department greatly augmented, but not so as to satisfy his ambition on any single line of ministerial labor. To every man his work; but along the line of his call and qualifications, God will make him a success, if he be wholly consecrated and divinely anointed.

We have often been impressed that very many

if not most preachers who have the work of revivals at heart, and yet who do not have as many and as great revivals as they desire, are not at fault as to preaching. They preach well enough to secure vastly more fruit than they do. That class of ministers who fail to find enough material and inspiration in the gospel, and go meandering off into the milky way of literary nebulae, or tramping round on desultory pilgrimages for some new social or philosophic topic, in order to give variety and attraction to the pulpit, are comparatively few in number; though the species of solderers and tinkerers is by no means extinct. The rank and file of evangelical ministers are men of God longing to see great revivals, and so far as preaching is concerned, many of them dispense truth enough to carry conviction and bring multitudes to Christ. Failing to achieve results commensurate with the amount of effort expended, the remedy is sought in preparing and preaching better sermons. The truth may be that the strength of the preacher is in his message already, and instead of strengthening the weak places he toils away at the strong ones. Ordinarily, *methods* are either wanting or inefficient, or ill adapted to arrest attention and facilitate the work of revival. Many of us need to study methods of personal appeal, and the

management of public meetings, more than we need a course of elocutionary training.

If we copy from others in detail, we are sure to be hampered and very little good can come of it; but a majority of men are copyists, and if we must copy why not endeavor to imitate something new? The usual routine of ordinary revival methods are not original with this generation. The copy is so old that it seems never to have been new, and hundreds are imitating it without the least idea that they are imitating methods. Song, prayer, sermon, invitation, song, prayer, doxology and benediction, in regular apostolic succession, from the fathers to the children. The use of the "Mourner's bench," has been vindicated by so many triumphs that it may never be superseded in Methodist history, but it is nevertheless an old copy, that none of us are ashamed to follow. When however we have failed in our attempts to use it, and the breach between the altar and the unconverted continues to defeat us, we may be compelled to resort to some method that will bridge it. If the old methods of vehement exhortation, and persistent appeals fail us, perhaps some method of personal effort, or pastoral visitation, or an after meeting, or a room of inquiry, or the organization of a working band, or a young people's

meeting, or children's meetings, or something new, will prepare the way for altar work, by stimulating the workers and breaking the ranks of the unconverted. May-be an hour with God, pleading for a key to the situation, will disclose the trouble and furnish a simple method that leads to success.

It is not strange that unquestionable methods, foolish methods, and even false methods, are sometimes employed. Good sense is essential to the creation of sensible methods, and moral honesty is equally requisite to the employment of truthful methods. Some men lack both, but their performances should not be charged to the evangelistic office.

"Papa, you almost got a letter ;" said a little fellow to his father.

"What do you mean, Johnny ?"

"Why, I saw one in the box right next to yours. It came purty near being your letter, didn't it ?"

Johnny is not the only "fellow" that reasons well on mistaken data. That class of preachers who oppose evangelists on the ground that some of them are not genuine, would be in a "bad box" if the same rule of unjust criticism was applied to them. We venture that evangelists are like other men, and range in ability and useful-

ness, all the way from mendicant tramps to men of apostolic spirit and splendid abilities. To assume that some men who lack common sense, resort to questionable methods, and exhibit a selfish spirit, are typical evangelists, is to taint the whole fraternity. Arguments that proceed on this implied assumption—as many of them do—are not only lacking in moral honesty, but the logical sequence is as wide of truth as a letter in the next box. Jesus was crucified between two thieves, but he wasn't a thief. If all the hard things that are said and written against evangelists as a class, on the score of extravagances employed by a few, were erased from the controversy, current criticism would have little left that does not apply to regular evangelistic pastors.

Mr. Bitler's methods are especially adapted to secure attention and produce results. While utterly devoid of ingenious nonsense, his changes of front, flank movements, and various tactics, are so apt and appropriate that they commend themselves to the audience and enlist their approval and co-operation, instead of their criticism. To one who looks on at a single meeting and goes away thinking he has seen the battle and surveyed its tactics, there seems to be but little that is new. If he comes again he will very

likely find a new field, and new phases of the same great work. To many, who witness the meetings clear through, the evangelist does not seem to follow any system of methods but dashes ahead and things happen to turn this way and that like the gusts of the wind, but to those better informed and careful to analyze, these great meetings are seen to be conducted in accordance with plans and methods as wisely adapted to the end in view as any system of military tactics. It would be impossible to record the details of attack, defense, siege, and we had almost said retreat, that are regularly and methodically provided for by Mr. Bitler; and we proceed to a general statement of some of the chief methods that characterize his meetings.



CHAPTER XXII.

BITLER'S METHODS.

THE BANNER—SCRIPTURE MOTTOES—TRACTS—THE
NEWSPAPERS—"DONE FOR EFFECT"—REACHING
THE MASSES—DEMONSTRATIONS.

The evangelist's first objective end is to secure the attention, and, as far as possible, the attendance of the people. His fame is not relied on to do this, nor does he wait to attract the multitudes by his preaching and the fruits of the revival. He wants to begin with a crowded house. He has no sympathy with the notion that religious people can have better meetings in the lecture room, and that the use of the main audience room will frighten workers and cool off things generally. He aims at immense results, and acts as if God meant to give them. He unfurls the *Banner* of invitation the first day; and while I write it may be seen on the corner of Main and Court streets, at the most conspicuous place in this city, and just where it can be seen by every citizen, or people that come to town from any point of the

compass. It consists of a piece of canvass about thirty feet long, and reads :

REVIVAL SERVICES TO-NIGHT AT THE M. E.
CHURCH.

It hangs about twenty-five feet above the pavement, stretching from a telephone to a telegraph pole, thus fitly representing Bro. Bitler's idea that these times of advancement in everything scientific, demands that the church and its religious enterprises rise to the same plane, and appeal to the people from the same elevated platform of advertisement and business-like methods.

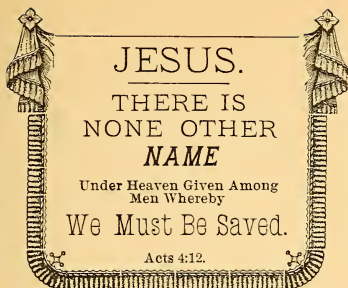
It was amusing to hear remarks that were elicited when the banner was put up. One said that it meant business ; another was ready to bet that the evangelist wouldn't get over a hundred converts ; while his comrade, having twice as much faith, put it at two hundred. The colored brother, whose fish stand was near by, chuckled and tossed his head knowingly, as much as to say the year of jubilee is come. A few good people seemed afraid to look at it, lest they might seem to sanction so great an innovation. It soon lost its alien look, except perhaps to those whose business the revival materially crippled. An instance of the estimate in which

the banner was held by a man whose craft was in danger, occurred at Gallipolis. Near the close of that meeting it was taken down; but new interest in the meetings led the evangelist to stay another week. In accordance with a desire expressed by many that had been converted, it was put up again one morning at day-break. A saloonist near by caught sight of it, and looking up he exclaimed, "Good Lord, aint that feller gone yet!" That fellow did not go until the number of converts reached more than six hundred, and some of them his best customers.

Another method of advertisement which appeals not only to the eye but to the heart, is to be seen on the walls of the room in which the meetings are held. "My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it," has often been verified by this method. Striking texts, painted in large legible letters, adorn the audience room on all sides.

What seems at first a novelty, becomes at last an attraction, and long before the series close, these flaming messages on the walls are as sacred to those assembled beneath them as when found in their own bibles. Their attachment is illustrated by the fact that when Mr.

Bitler left Gallipolis the people plead for the banners. They were all taken down and ready to be sent to the next place of meeting, but at their earnest solicitation they were put up again, and so remain to this day. Quite a large amount of money was raised at the close of the meeting at Gallipolis for the purpose of repairing and frescoing the church, and such was the intense desire to perpetuate the memory of the revival in these sacred texts, that many have informally requested that they be painted on the walls, and thus become perpetual mementoes of that great work of God and its hallowed associations. If the reader would have a view of the scene, let him suppose himself to be seated in the midst of a vast audience, every available seat occupied, the platform crowded, many about the door and skirting the aisles, and the walls lined with a file of persons glad even to stand during the service. The pulpit is wheeled aside, the organ is placed in the centre, and the evangelist at the front, stands ready to deliver his message without pulpit, book, note, or any other rest, from which to take aim at the hearts he hopes to capture for the Master. Just above and back of him hangs the blue banner against the niche in the wall, and it reads:



To the right and left of this, and occupying all the space to the adjacent walls, are two scriptural invitations. The one on the left is from Isa, 55: 1:

**HO! EVERY ONE THAT
THIRSTETH Come ye
to the WATERS.**

The other on the right is from Jno., 6: 37:

**HIM THAT COMETH TO ME
I WILL IN NO WISE CAST OUT.**

On the opposite walls are six of these banners, so arranged that "companion pieces" face each

other; for instance, the following are hung directly opposite each other:

THERE IS NO
PEACE
SAITH MY
GOD
TO THE WICKED.

Isa. 51:21.

WE HAVE
PEACE
WITH GOD
THROUGH OUR
LORD
JESUS CHRIST.

Rom. 5:1.

The prophecy that "the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it," has in this, at least a measure of fulfillment. Turning to leave the room, the attention is attracted by a text that stretches above the door. It is larger, and has been more frequently referred to, in connection with serious impressions, than any of the others. It reads: YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN.

Another method of advertisement is the distribution of invitation *tracts*, which Mr. Bitler has had published by the thousand and spreads like the leaves of autumn. One of these is a single leaflet, with an invitation to the meetings on one side and a brief scriptural sermon on the other. The other is a four-leafed tract, which,

in view of its emphasis of prominent words, and its judicious presentation of the truth to the unconverted, is well calculated to attract attention and appeal to the conscience. It bears the striking title of *A MESSAGE TO YOU*. The method of utilizing these tracts is chiefly along the lines of personal work. The evangelist, in company with the pastor, sallies forth to visit men in their places of business, distributing the tracts to any that may be present, and supplying the counters of business men. Christian workers, and especially the young converts, are provided with a good supply, and they serve well to introduce the subject of religion and act as reminders when the worker has passed on.

THE NEWSPAPERS.

A false modesty might lead christian workers to shrink from giving great publicity to successful revival efforts, but there is another view of it, viz., that everybody ought to know what God is doing for the salvation of men. Mr. Bitler takes that view. Believing that the secular press will command an immense influence, he aims to secure its favor from the start. Personally visiting the editors he solicits and secures their aid in reporting fully everything of interest that may transpire during the re-

vival. Thus the work is noised abroad. Flaming headlines become an evangel to hundreds that might otherwise be in total ignorance of the meetings, and they come to see for themselves. We know instances of persons who read these revival accounts and came in from the country, not only to see, but to seek salvation. One was converted who was led to seek the Lord at home, and who was not in attendance at the meetings until after her conversion. Think of a political organ becoming the medium through which a casual reader is led to seek and find the Savior! The fame of any successful revivalist will give him a multitude of hearers, and it would seem that this fact would render Bro. Bitler's method of advertisement wholly unnecessary. But it must be borne in mind that he attempts to reach a class that ordinary announcements would not attract. Many converts, referred to in previous pages, had not been inside of any church for years, and he caught their attention on the wing. The newspapers kept the whole community astir, so that his audience was not confined to the church. They waked up intense interest many miles beyond the central fires, and lesser revivals were kindled and quickened, so that this method gave him a hold on congregations he never saw.

So far as we know, Bro. Bitler never wrote a line or dictated a notice, but his peculiar aptness at securing helpers employed the talents of others.

It is sometimes difficult to disassociate all evidences of personal pride from popular exhibitions and public displays. Very few men could occupy a conspicuous place in the affairs of society, and continue to exhibit results that in so great a degree redound to their fame, without appearing to be proud, or eventually becoming so. All successful men have this gauntlet to run. Yet the *tendency* to personal laudation, so universal to human nature, must not be made an absolute barrier to *success*, for if to avoid the one we give up the other, we make a virtue of *failure*. Humility is a great grace, and one of the brightest ornaments of greatness, and with many minds in possession of it, all efforts at display are condemned as savoring of ostentation and pride, and utterly inconsistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ. If the least leaven of personal laudation were seen to enter the evangelist's method of *noising abroad* the triumphs of the gospel, it would so poison the mess that we would be driven to the cry of the sons of the prophets, "O thou man of God, there is death in the pot." Certainly the Holy Spirit would have no complicity with this thing, and the

whole effort would soon come to an end, or run on as a perversion or a burlesque.

We have known many conscientious ministers who refused to report their revivals through the columns of the official papers of the church, simply because it seemed to them to savor of display. They forget that a column of revival news cheers the churches and quickens the faith of thousands. Saints are encouraged and sinners are awed by the display of divine power. It is human nature to express their appreciation by marches and processions. Drums, banners and sky-rockets, are their highest ideals of patriotic expression. Wise men are not moved by them but they know how to utilize them. Napoleon once said to an attendant, "You are very fortunate, you are not obliged to make a show of yourself; but as for me, I must go in a procession; this is what I dislike; but we must have a display; this is what the people like." Whatever else Napoleon was, he was a consummate general, and knew how to manage civilians as well as soldiers. While the same spectacular cannot be employed in religious methods as in social or political life, nevertheless we have the same elements of human nature, and so far as it may not offend good taste or contradict the spirit of the gospel, it behooves us to attract attention and ex-

hibit the trophies of conquest. Once, early in the meeting held at Circleville, Bro. Bitler invited all who had been converted to come to the platform, and it was immediately crowded with perhaps more than a hundred persons. A gentleman in the audience remarked to a friend that that was *done for effect*. "Yes," replied the other, "and why not? It is enough to affect anybody, and I like a preacher that can affect something." It is doubtless the experience of Methodist preachers, that early in a series of meetings it is difficult to secure a large attendance. But just as soon as conversions begin to occur and the matter gets noised abroad, the crowds come to see what is going on. Curiosity and inquisitiveness are the poles of a magnet that are more attractive than the ordinary amusements that have hitherto kept them away. The motives that bring them are as utterly devoid of religious interest as the bills of a circus, and they come to see the show; but if the spirit of awakening becomes general, they are as readily reached as many who have been usual attendants. The mere exhibition of revival results if it is designed simply to satisfy morbid curiosity and secure a crowd, must be deprecated; but if by encouraging public testimony, and calling attention to the work of God in saving sinners, it is intended to

bring the masses within the range of the gospel message and secure their salvation, the fact that they are led to think, and finally to surrender, is proof of its wisdom. "The children of this generation are wiser than the children of light," and it is time we applied successful business methods of advertisement and announcement to the great business of saving souls.

REACHING THE MASSES.

It has been a problem that has worried the pulpit, and been discussed in every variety of form in christian conventions, and occupied many columns in the press; but few men have found a practical solution by which they could reach and rouse the multitudes. The pulpit of the Methodist Episcopal Church has had less concern on this subject than some others, and yet in very many instances the same defect is visible. Mr. Moody's method solves the problem in his hands and under the inspiration of his presence. His injunction to "*go for them,*" is perhaps as good as any, if only the spirit of personal work would characterize christian people under the leadership of the pastor. Mr. Bitler's method is first to *attract them*, and then "*go for them.*" He finds no difficulty in holding them when once they come, for the

reason that he keeps everything of interest at the front, and they come again. Mere reliance on pulpit efforts, however gifted the preacher, is not always sure to win. Wendell Phillips delivered an address in Central Park, New York City, and a dog fight took place at the other end of the park at the same hour. The dogs had the crowd. Phillips may have had the consolation of knowing that he had the *brains*; but ministers of Jesus Christ will never secure the conversion of the world if their conversions are limited to that class. The unthinking masses must be attracted, and set to thinking. If there is any medium between a dog fight and a tongue of gifted utterance, that can be wisely employed to secure this end, it is the long sought "philosopher's stone," and no place is so in need of its employment as the church of God.

When on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out there were *demonstrations* attending it, "and when this was noised abroad the multitude came together." While there were "devout men" among them, it is presumed that the mass was not attracted by any religious significance attaching to the announcement, but simply to see the phenomena of fiery tongues, or hear the noise of rejoicing believers. The tap of a fire bell will

rouse a whole city and every body runs. Just a moment ago the alarm was sounded, and now as I write the multitudes are running past my study in search of the fire. Who has not known them to get up at night, and after they reach the scene, to stand and shiver by the hour, with no object in view except just to see the fire. The multitudes that thronged the aisles and filled the door way, and extended as far as the street, and stood up by the hour during these great meetings, were simply attracted by pentecostal flames, and when conversions occurred in their sight, or the announcement was made in their hearing, that persons were being converted in the Inquiry Room, they joined as lustily in singing the doxology as some of the saints. It was the mark of apostolic preaching that it was "in *demonstration* of the Spirit, and of power." It is doubtful if any great work of the Holy Spirit is on record that was not attended with more or less of *demonstration*.

When George Gilfillen heard of the great Irish revival he doubted its genuineness, and said it was wild-fire ; but when he went to see it, he very soon changed his mind and testified that it could be none other than the work of God. Jesus did many miracles. The apostles worked "mighty signs and wonders." The Methodist fathers were

attended with marvellous demonstrations of power. Every revival is attended with a variety of demonstrations that leads men to marvel. Whatever form they may take, they are usually simple manifestations of hidden phenomena, and though they have no moral value in themselves, they serve to index the Spirit and confound the multitudes. (Acts 2: 6.) Once under way a revival becomes an attraction, and it continues to hold the attention of the people while these spectacular evidences of power are witnessed. Under Bro. Bitler's method of advertisement, by the use of tracts, invitations, mottoes, and banner, he has a vast audience at the first service and before the novelty of this method has worn off the revival is under way, and its results are crowded to the front. Let conservatives criticise if they will, but before they cover themselves with the mantle of pious modesty, let them go to work and get half as many people converted in some dark corner. It might not meet the approval of such, but we verily believe that Bro. Bitler would write his announcements and publish the results of each revival on the expanded sky, if he could, and then call on the passing winds to sing the doxology over every soul born into the kingdom.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Bitler's Methods, Continued.

HELP WHEN NEEDED—SOUNDING HIS TRUMPET
— LOOSE ENDS—SINGING — SHAKING HANDS—
SPECIAL FEATURES—DOCTRINES PREACHED—NO
OPPOSITION.

It will doubtless occur to the reader that these methods must involve the evangelist in some expense, and that a precarious income that is chiefly supplied during the winter season would scarcely warrant this extra outlay. Viewed from the standpoint of a Local Preacher, without either appointment or secular employment, and facing the future with all its contingencies, it does look dark; but Bro. Bitler has always found that God provides

Help When Needed.

It is not often that a vast secular concern is identified in any way with the work of God; but in this case an exception is found worthy the emulation of the rich men of Methodism. When Bro. Bitler started out on his evangelistic mission, without salary or promise of financial

support, Messrs. G. M. and O. G. Peters, of the Columbus Buggy Company, Columbus, Ohio, came to his help and proffered a stipulated sum per month as a subscription to his support. Both were members of his Official Board at Wesley Chapel, and aside from a personal concern for his welfare, they were in sympathy with his work, and anticipated gracious results. Bro. Bitler's methods of advertisement, when known to them, appealed at once to their practical business sense, and met their approval, just as such methods have since done when brought to the attention of others who have proved their efficiency by their success. The evangelist, for the reason that any such contribution would have violated the very principle on which he had started out, viz., that of depending solely upon the people among whom he labored for temporal support, felt that he could not accept the proffered gift without being embarrassed by it. He therefore declined it. But to utilize his methods, he needed money. Banners, tracts, mottoes, and, in brief, all the advertising methods he employs to attract the attention of the people and noise abroad the revival news, were to be provided for, and a subscription of twenty five dollars per month was accepted for this purpose from these brethren.

This fact was not heralded by the evangelist, nor did it appear in his advertising; but in view of his grateful appreciation and the credit due to them it is mentioned here. At Gallipolis, on "Jubilee Day," he received the following telegram:

"Praise God for your success. Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase, both spiritually and temporally. Draw on us for your needs.

"COLUMBUS BUGGY COMPANY."

Here is a firm owning the largest carriage and buggy factory in the world, employing nearly a regiment of men, averaging one vehicle every eight minutes, with ten acres of floor in the various departments, and with everything proportionately immense, that not only indorse the practical, business-like methods of the evangelist, but take pleasure in contributing to their success. This firm, embracing George M. Peters, C. D. Firestone and O. G. Peters, all united with the church in their youth, during a *revival*, and feel it their duty to help on the *revival* work in this practical way. Their great temporal success is a verification of the Scripture: "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth." In revivals, "he that soweth sparingly shall also reap

sparingly," and in Bro. Bitler's work he recognizes this principle and anticipates great results by breaking up a good deal of ground at the start. His boldness inspires confidence in others, and before the fire begins to kindle everybody looks for a great revival. It may seem to the reader that all this bold enterprise, displayed by advertisement and "flourish of trumpets," is hazardous. What if, after all, he should fail to have a revival? It would indeed be a ridiculous predicament, and a defeat would capture all his guns and trail his banners in the dust. But the case of the taking of Jericho furnishes an exact parallel. What a ridiculous predicament awaited the tramping hosts of Israel as they blew their horns round that great walled city! The only thing that let them out of what might have appeared a very silly venture was the falling of the walls. Our Bro. would plead guilty to the charge that he sounds his trumpet, and not only so, but he gets everybody else to blow theirs; so that in about seven days every horn in Israel is lustily blown, and God looks after results.

After all, the figure in his case is not an exact parallel, for very early in the revival he expects to find a few loose stones that can be taken down one at a time. He announced to the writer at

the beginning of the Circleville meeting that he was looking for

LOOSE ENDS.

This statement was repeated several times, and when asked to explain he replied that when it was impossible to tear a garment by main strength you might find loose ends and then unravel it. He sought these loose ends by personal work, in the congregation and on the street, and when he found a thread that would "give" he held to it with all his might. May not this furnish a suggestion to other workers who are looking for a "break" in revival meetings, when if they would address more attention to special cases the way for a break would be prepared?

SINGING.

The first half hour of every general meeting is devoted to song. With a voice of considerable compass, and supported by members of the choir and a chorus of young people, accompanied by organ and cornet, he leads the congregation and gets all the people to sing. Among the first things, by way of preparation, is to get a book in everybody's hand. These are not distributed gratuitously.

When a brother proposed to purchase a large quantity of the little books and distribute them,

Bro. Bitler refused, on the ground that people will take care of their own property, whereas if furnished gratuitously they would soon destroy them.

SHAKING HANDS

With people sitting in rows and afraid to move lest they attract attention, it is impossible to utilize the latent power of a congregation. Ease and freedom must be secured without offending good taste or any of the social proprieties. It is almost cruel to ask christians, many of whom never entered a large congregation without embarrassment, to turn "about face" and start out on a mission of personal work. A few persons of nerve, or an occasional hero, may volunteer. Occasionally a good brother who has reached the shouting point and let go, may attempt obedience to such a request while his blood is up. Some heroine, whose crucifixion has been complete, may attempt the forlorn hope, but the effort is equal to a nervous shock. Exhortations that belabor christian people for declining to do this work are devoid of consideration. If formalism can be broken, and between the extremes of a Sunday funeral and a church social we can secure a happy medium that will relieve embarrassment, there will be no trouble to secure workers in the congregation. Bro.

Bitler aims at this the first night of the meeting, and gets the ice to floating in warm currents that melt it entirely. At the close of his first address he woke up the spirit of song, and when the tide was high he invited the people to gather about the altar and take him by the hand. They were expected to continue the singing and not only to shake hands with him but with each other. On his part he would accept this courtesy as a cordial welcome to the city and as a pledge of their support and co-operation in this work. Before they were aware of it the "upper room" had lost its parlor-like formality and the people began to feel at home. Ritualistic proprieties were laid aside for warm heart-felt congratulations, and with a hundred young people on and about the platform, and christians crowding to the front, singing and shaking hands was made easy. The writer confesses a natural reserve and possibly a severity of taste that long regarded an indiscriminate handshake with aversion. It seemed like a general hurrah calculated to dissipate serious and sacred impressions, and especially embarrassing. But after considerable observation, both in revivals and at camp-meetings, he frankly confesses his mistake, and believes that the very embarrassment complained of is thus effectually relieved, and the way to personal work in the con-

gregation is thus made easy. This opinion, though it was formed before laboring with Bro. Bitler, was very greatly strengthened by observing his methods. Prior to his coming, and at the first meeting held in January, we determined to introduce handshaking, and at the close of the service gave the invitation; and since we could not ask others to take the lead, we summoned our courage and went at it about as a boy getting ready to plunge into a cold bath. The venture was vindicated by the result, for we soon found a young lady in the congregation who was weeping, and when urged to give her heart to the Savior she immediately began to seek Him, and was very soon after converted. This was the "first convert" whose death is recorded in a previous chapter. Occasionally hand-shaking was resorted to later in the meetings, but when the evangelist came he shook up the congregation almost daily, and set the mass adrift almost every time it seemed to get lodged. If we are to reach the masses, social lines of division must be lost sight of. The lowly must be lifted and the lofty lowered, and we know of no special evangelizing agency that can do this so successfully as the promiscuous shaking of hands while blending our voices in the songs of Zion. A wild stampede, or an extreme of boisterous demonstrations,

will excite the disgust of discriminating minds, while cold formality will be fatal to religion. Good sense is the only ballast that will hold the vessel level under a tremendous hand-shaking breeze, that stretches every inch of canvass and wakes up the billows of a great revival.

SPECIAL FEATURES.

Bro. Bitler combines the use of an *Altar of Prayer* and an *Inquiry Room*, or employs either of these methods as the indications of the meeting may seem to suggest. At Circleville the first was employed, until the crowds became so dense that there was absolutely no room for altar work. It reminded one of a flood, when the back water so nearly covers the wheel that the miller is said to be "drowned out." To relieve this, double meetings were held, and an altar service conducted in each. Pastor and evangelist "exchanged pulpits" from time to time, but it soon became arduous and exhausting, and the lecture room was reserved for an Inquiry meeting. The main service was conducted as before, and seekers were requested to retire to that place for conversation and prayer. Only such with their friends and chosen workers were invited. There they were invited to kneel at the altar, and the meeting was conducted similar to an altar service

above, except that seekers received the entire attention of those conducting the meeting. It was thought best, not to enforce the rule rigidly as to attendance in the inquiry room, because it was discovered that persons wounded in the upper room were captured after coming here. Their presence was taken as an indication that they desired to converse on the subject of religion, and the opportunity was not lost. Later on the place became an attraction for workers that were needed in the main audience, the unconverted found it the place of greatest interest, and the room was soon packed with a standing congregation, so that there was no room to work or stir. This method was then abandoned. The front seats in the main room were cleared and seekers were invited to kneel or be seated there, and thus the interest was transferred from method to method as the case demanded. In order to reach a class that needed special instruction, or such as shrank from any public identity with either of these methods, an occasional meeting for inquirers was held at some special hour of the day. None but inquirers were admitted. Each case was examined separately, and then instructed, and finally pressed to yield and believe. Many were thus brought into the light, and usually all that came were converted.

We cannot descend further into the minutia of Bro. Bitler's methods. Some of them may be regarded as sensational, but they are free from the charge of being nonsense-ational. Whether reading revival news from adjacent towns and villages, calling out reports from visiting ministers or resident members, or narrating remarkable cases of recent conviction and conversion, he is constantly noising abroad the work of grace. The true inwardness of his meetings is seen in their outwardness, and every method is frank and open with no attempt at concealment or deception. Thus he commands the respect and secures the confidence of the people, and we have yet to learn of a single instance in which his methods have met with criticism or censure.

It is remarkable that he meets with no opposition from without that can be regarded as of any importance. With many interests financially concerned—saloons not making expenses, houses of prostitution almost deserted, skating rinks crippled, transient dramatic troupes avoiding the city, so that a theatre would stand almost idle—yet no hostility observed, and murmurs of approval floating in the air. Why is this? Is the evangelist false to the truth? Does he compromise with sin and trail the standards of doctrine. A partial answer is found in the fact that he an-

tagonizes nobody. He says nothing about infidelity, argues against no special trade, traffic or sin. Dancing clubs, euchre parties and side issues are not noticed. He pays no attention to difficulties, and gives no prominence to anything the enemy does till he surrenders, then he sings the doxology and displays the trophy. The doctrines preached are typical of any Methodist revival: Sin, repentance, faith, the witness of the Spirit, holiness, heaven: death, hell, the judgment, eternity; all these were lifted like banners, waving an alarm or an invitation. He aims to convince the judgment, and rouse the conscience; stirs the feelings by pathetic incidents and tender appeals, and makes the *will* his objective point. This he aims to carry by sunshine and storm, and never flags or wavers or lets up on a sinner till he yields that point and *submits* to God.

We are obliged to record one exception to the statement that Bro. Bitler met with no opposition. The German Lutheran minister became concerned for his flock lest they should experience the witness of justification by faith, and labored to divert them with all the industry that Luther employed to establish its truth. He circulated a silly pamphlet on the "Mourner's bench," and secured a lecturer who gave an hour

to the treatment of a theme that was intended to guard against the pernicious effects of revivals. No attention was paid to this and but for the fact that his influence may have kept some of the "confirmed" away from Christ, it was too contemptible to deserve notice. Poor fellow, the english language and the evangelistic spirit of Martin Luther is destined to cover him up and conquer the world.



CHAPTER XXIV.

PASTOR AND EVANGELIST.

PASTOR THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF — EVANGELIST
TO HAVE FULL SCOPE — NOT TO BE DIVORCED
FROM HIS METHODS — CONSPICUOUS ABSENTEES —
ORDER OF SIGNATURES — FALLING OFF — ALL
EVANGELISTIC AGENCIES ONE WORK.

The relations of pastor and evangelist are not only intimate, but sometimes very delicate. Officially the pastor stands at the head, and his authority is recognized as supreme. His pulpit cannot be occupied by another without his consent, and the series of meetings are under his supervision and control. The evangelist is a subordinate officer, and he must recognize the pastor as commander-in-chief. But, though this relation must be mutually understood and recognized, there is another phase of the subject that practically puts the evangelist at the head and in the lead. In the nature of things the evangelist will take precedence and become more prominent as a factor of the meetings than the pastor himself. The prestige of former suc-

cesses, the confidence and expectation his presence inspires, together with the novelty of his methods, will lead the people to exalt him, and for a time almost forget the faithful pastor. This is itself a feature of success, and contributes largely to the size and complexion of the congregations. Were the order reversed—the pastor new, and the evangelist familiar,—the pastor would become the object of attention. Any pastor, therefore, that expects to be the recognized force of the meeting will likely find himself so deeply “snowed under” that nothing but weeks of effective service will restore him to his throne of former prestige. The man that is not willing to succumb to the force of circumstances should be content to labor alone and continue to be monarch of all he surveys. The pastor that refused to send for an evangelist, and turned the brethren away by saying, “If he can’t preach better than I can, *you* don’t need him, and if he can, *I* don’t want him,” was not willing to be temporarily superseded, even for Christ’s sake.

The evangelist and his methods must not be divorced. If the pastor feels that his official authority is compromised by giving the evangelist full scope, he is the wrong man to labor with an evangelist. We never knew an evangelist of

any note that was not specially effective, because of his management and the employment of his methods. What he says, does, and succeeds in getting others to do, constitutes his service and insures his success. If he is limited and embarrassed in either of these, his locks are shorn and he becomes weak as other men. If the methods employed by an evangelist are not in accord with the views of the pastor, he has made a mistake in inviting him. His duty to the church and himself would seem to require that he know the man and his methods before he indorses both by an invitation. If, therefore, a pastor wants "a first-rate, second-rate man, to assist in his work, he should secure the appointment of a sub-pastor; he has no use for an original genius who is specially endowed by the Holy Spirit to be an evangelist.

The evangelist that would "come into a charge and assume the whole business and practically ignore the pastor and everybody else," would certainly belong to a class of house-breakers that deserve either to be barred out or locked up. But, on the other hand, a stickler for nice points of prerogative, who assumes control in detail, and seeks to confine the labors of an evangelist to a sphere of subordinate importance, would as certainly defeat the

evangelist as that he continues to hold the reins. In most cases a mutual agreement and a natural adjustment of work and methods will harmonize the relations of both, and in the end leave the pastor not only at the head of his forces, but so fully enshrined in the hearts of the people that the young converts will lean upon him and look to him as a shepherd and guide.

The pastor that insisted on occupying the pulpit on Sunday and further stipulated for the regular prayer-meeting on Wednesday night, made but one mistake: He should have filled the programme for the week. The case as it was, exhibited a species of narrowness that is sometimes exhibited in *union* meetings, when the tenacious prelate insists on going through the forms prescribed by his *church* before the union part of the programme is recognized. Extremists and bigots will doubtless curse the church and the world till the millennium; but neither extreme, of impudence on the part of an irregular evangelist, or jealous authority on the part of a regular pastor, can be legitimately employed as illustrations for or against the evangelistic field. They cancel each other, and weigh nothing except as antidotes.

From the *Lamp of Life* we clip the following:

“The *Canadian Baptist* thus justly reflects upon

Mr. Moody's meetings at Toronto: 'We see no reason why each church, presided over by its pastor, should not be proportionately as successful as those meetings presided over by Mr. Moody. Were the praying done with equal earnestness by the membership, and the audience secured with equal solicitation; were the singing as sympathetically and faithfully prepared; were the coming of God's blessing as confidently expected, the poorest preacher, if earnest, would undoubtedly be instrumental in effecting large results. If christian people generally would do with the same persistency and enthusiasm what Toronto christians did for the Moody meetings, great results and evidences of God's power would cease to be exceptional.' "

We judge that this paragraph was not written in the spirit of detraction. It is undoubtedly the truth, and were the churches as earnest in the support of their pastors, in most cases the results would be correspondingly great. But we must take things as they are, not as we could wish they were. Churches, as a rule, do not rally to the support of pastors with a cordiality and unanimity that insures success. Chief among the reasons that make a revivalist a necessity is this very fact. What pastor has not found that his Sabbath congregations and the week-night congregations differ chiefly in the absence of the very men that ought to stand by him in

the hottest of the fight? Where are the churches that can boast the presence of an official board at revival meetings, without some conspicuous exceptions? Many who are prominent in securing his appointment or in contributing to his support, either ignore him altogether in a revival, or leave him to labor with the little band of saints and growing congregation of sinners till things begin to boil over, and then either honor him with a transient visit or raise a question of current expense, and "wonder how long these meetings are going to run." Many a godly pastor has wept over this state of affairs, and if those who know little about it can give us a better magnet by which to attract the whole church than the coming of an evangelist, we have the key to the coming of the millennium. Once let an evangelist sail in like a storm, and shake up old forms like an earthquake, and all the good people that haven't time to stand by the pastor will be seen in the distance, and peradventure get wounded even at long range. Perhaps the next siege may find them evangelistic enough to stand by the pastor as he stands by the guns. Moreover, human nature is fickle, and the tendency to pursue the marvelous is universally prevalent. The pastor may preach like Apollos and argue like Paul, but when the novelty is worn off, and

the marvelous is dissipated, "some new thing" is as much in demand as in the days of Athenian curiosity. An evangelist, with the prestige of immense success, the novelty of special methods, and the promise of a repetition of similar results, will do more by the very promise of his coming, than almost any pastor can accomplish by months of persistent pulpit and pastoral preparation. When Bro. Bitler was announced for Circleville it rolled a ripple across the city that stirred all classes, and kindled an expectancy that made saloonists fear the result, and christians to congratulate themselves in anticipation of it.

The pastor who has experienced every phase of these influences, alone can appreciate the immense advantage of an evangelist to agitate the mass and awaken the latent energies of the church.

In issuing our card of invitation (referred to in the chapter on the Circleville jubilee) it so happened that the signatures of evangelist and pastor were printed in the order just named. Among those sent out was one addressed to the Editor of the *Christian Advocate*. It appeared in substance in that paper with the following comment :

We have received a printed invitation to be present at the "jubilee," signed by "J. S. Bitler, Evan-

gelist, and C. F. Creighton, Pastor." We reproduce no notices signed in this order, but cheerfully announce the above service in the name of C. F. Creighton, pastor, with J. S. Bitler as evangelist.—
ED. C. A.

In this particular case the inference does not apply, for the reason that the pastor himself wrote the card and affixed the signatures. The order was not thought of, and the names affixed were set down about as indifferently as though both were spelled alike. But the comment is significant and sets the door ajar that opens into a large field of controversy; one element of which is the idea of trespass on the part of evangelists on the authoritative domain of the regular pastorate. We admit the force of such suggestions and their possible illustration in some cases, but insist that the case in hand was not only not one of them, nor is such the necessary tendency. If, however, we are compelled to admit such tendency on the experience of others, we commiserate them in being unfortunate, and commend the example of Bro. Bitler as an exception worthy the imitation of other evangelists.

Bro. Bitler recognizes his relation to the pastor as that of a Helper. No occasion has arisen in all his labors hitherto for the least misunderstanding, or the slightest difference on grounds of

jurisdiction. He feels especially grateful that his lot has been cast with men that have not only approved but appreciated his labors, and did so much to insure his success and forward the work of God. In every instance special attachments have sprung up, and his regard for each of them is more to him like the affection of a brother than the mere professional relation that existed between them. On the other hand we are assured that the same regard is reciprocated by the pastors themselves. The labors, and christian spirit manifested by Bros. Riker, Turner, Green and Lewis, are often referred to by him, in terms that betoken an appreciation of their influence in bringing about results, that seems almost to lay his laurels at their feet. Truly they are entitled to share them. In what proportion God only knows. They certainly made his triumphs possible and contributed their full quota to the aggregate numbers saved. This itself, covering a period of more than a year's labor, and in various fields, is enough to prove the harmonious adjustment of the regular pastorate and the special evangelist, especially as illustrated in the work of Bro. Bitler.

He not only expects the co-operation of the pastor in all his methods, but as earnestly desires that he be so completely identified with the re-

vival results, that when it becomes necessary for him to leave the field the work may go on, and culminate with the reins so fully in the hands of the pastor, that the transition to regular pastoral work and methods, may be made without a pause or break. We believe this has been the case in every instance, and with a new swarm on his hands the pastor is left with responsibilities vast enough to make an angel tremble.

It is alleged that there is a greater falling off after revivals conducted by evangelists than after those conducted by pastors. True there is. *The greater the revival, the more perceptible the reaction.* Pastors that have the greatest revivals suffer most from loss of probationers. Persons in the habit of disparaging revivals are not slow to mark these defections, and then assert that the converts are all gone back. Methodism is a revival, and we are not ignorant of this old disparagement of Methodist revivals. The fact is that Methodism in all its denominational branches numbers five millions strong, and if we continue to backslide at that rate for the next hundred years we can stand it, and furnish some other denominations with a few ministers and members besides. In working among the masses of the people, we handle a good deal of lumber, and no wonder if we threw away more bark than some

of our critics. One of our greatest evangelists said that when he fished with a net he caught some frogs that were sure to hop out. Turning to a scriptural figure—the good fish were gathered and the bad were thrown away, showing that the fish were not sorted before they were caught, and that the gospel net takes all kinds.

When Jesus was on earth, some that had been disciples “went back and walked no more with him.”

The seed that was scattered by the sower was “good seed,” but some of it fell on stony ground, some by the wayside, some the fowls took, some was choked and some brought a fruitful harvest.

Any body that will look at these proportions, will see that there was a great loss of good seed, and the same ratio applied to revivals does in no way disparage the seed or the sower. Yet it is frequently urged against evangelists, when it applies also to the Savior, and the inspired account of genuine gospel revivals Unless we take refuge behind an old barrier that has long since been *practically* abandoned by its friends, and assert that “once in grace always in grace,” we are compelled to expect as one mark of a great revival that some of the number will backslide. *2 Peter, 2:22*, will be verified if the revival goes

deep enough to reach men that are living for their lusts.*

The work of evangelism, whether under forms of the regular pastorate, or the special agency of evangelists, must be regarded as one work, and that the work of God. If denominations which differ in everything that belongs to method and polity, and agree in the essential evangelical doctrines, must be counted in the aggregate to make the visible church of God, then *special evangelistic agencies* may justly claim the same practical identity on the ground of this agreement. Indeed the only point of agreement that is absolutely essential is the experimental. It is a matter of mutual rejoicing, that regular pastorates are now more thoroughly imbued with the spirit of revival than ever before, and that special evangelistic agencies are increasing. Evangelists are far more numerous than we are

*The whole number of conversions at the Gallipolis revival was 625. Of these, many were members of the different churches of the city; but 416 united with the Methodist Episcopal Church. After six months trial, *only thirty-three were dropped.* Of the remainder, 3 died, 6 joined other churches, 29 removed by letter, 25 removed without letter, 60 were continued on probation (many of these were children), and 260 were recommended to be received into full connection. Of these, 223 were present and took the vows of the church. We are not ready to report from Circleville, but expect the ratio to be equally good.

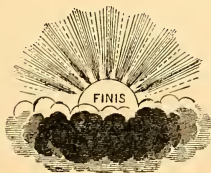
apt to suppose. They are hard to number on the wing, but at a meeting held at "Ocean Grove," there were 1,500 of them present.

Great revivals are becoming more frequent. Camp-meetings are multiplying. Last year more than two hundred camp-meetings were held under the auspices of the Methodist Episcopal Church alone. Scriptural holiness leavens the churches and permeates these special agencies, and during the past year sixty conventions were held for the promotion of holiness, aside from the camp-meetings.

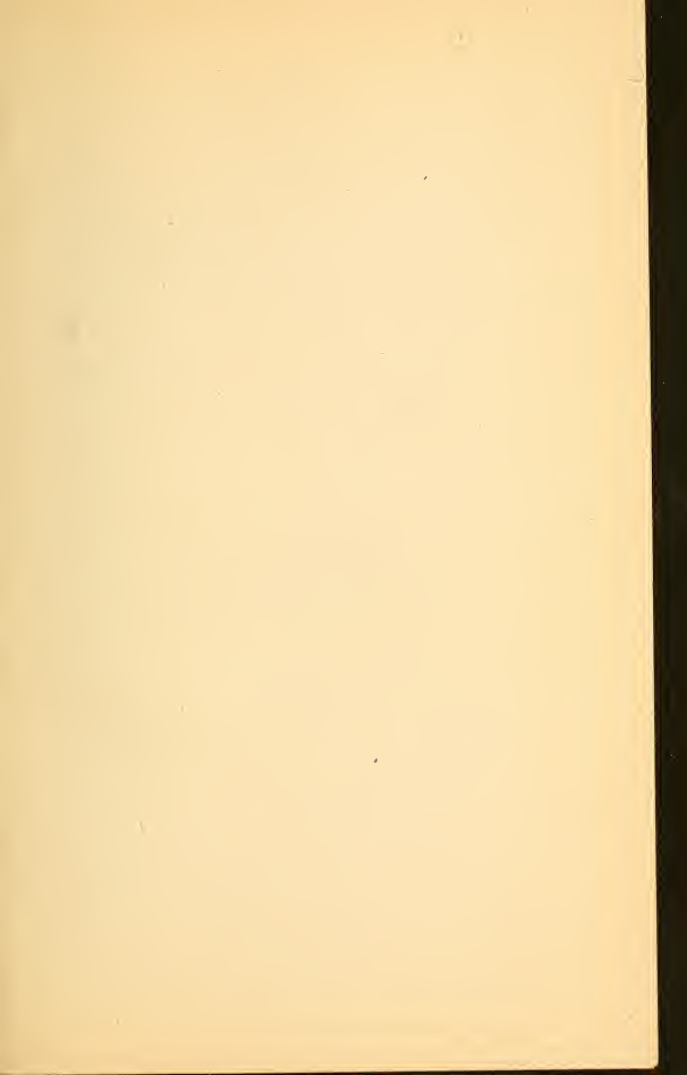
The divine mission of Women is being recognized, and not only utilized in subordinate spheres as heretofore, but conspicuously advanced to the front of missionary and evangelistic work.

The Salvation Army with 1,000 Corps, and 2,400 Officers, now numbers 600,000 strong.

We are in the midst of an evangelistic period that is destined to secure the ends for which Jesus died, and hasten "the coming of the day of God."













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